

Les Paradis du monde

Quebec folk art

PASCALE GALIPEAU

in association with
Paul Carpentier, Richard Millette
and Mauro Peressini

Canadian Museum of Civilization

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The original spelling of the titles of the works has been respected.

Abbreviations

CMC	Canadian Museum of Civilization
CCFCS	Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies

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Abstract

The works' relation to their collection, representative of an ideology, an era—even of a way of collecting, is the main theme of this book on Quebec's folk art. Three major collections from the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) embody the Quebec folk art: the collection of Marius Barbeau, which is resolutely traditional; the collection of English connoisseurs, which reveals the other culture's perspective; and the collection of works by the "patenteux", which has a contemporary outlook.

Essays from Paul Carpentier, Director, Collection and Information Access Branch at the CMC; Richard Millette, Ceramicist; and Mauro Peressini, Curator of the South-West European Programme of the Canadian Centre for Folk Studies also from the CMC, complete this publication.

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Foreword

I MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT it right from the start—I have a great weakness for the art of the “patenteux,” those artisans of whimsy whose work makes up what is probably the least prestigious of the Canadian Museum of Civilization’s collections. I love these works because they have a powerful emotional appeal that reflects the turbulent years of their discovery. Naturally, I could go on to invent all sorts of vain reasons for my preference for this rather delinquent aesthetic form, whereas the other collections tend to leave me cold. In the latter’s defense, however, it must be said that our “national treasures” began to come alive for me as I explored the avenues that led to their entry into the museum; I became interested in these collections as phenomena, and sought to grasp the role they played in shaping the collective identity. Classical art is not half so pretentious when balanced by its counterweight...

In short, for no legitimate reason whatsoever but that of purely arbitrary choice, the contemporary section has been given pride of place in the selection of the works.

I confess that my undertaking as an appraiser of collections was biased from the start. But isn’t that always the case? Everything in a museum is based on a certain ideology—even the protestations of neutrality, which constitute the greatest institutional snub of all.¹ If truth be told, there is no such thing as an “objective” museum collection, and in the future we will have to admit to our subjectivity. This essay on the folk art collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization has brought me to explore the ideology underlying the preservation of heritage. It is time to demystify this aspect of the creative process to show that here, too, aesthetic judgments bear consequences, and that—even in folk art—everything is political.

PASCALE GALIPEAU

Guest Curator

Canadian Museum of Civilization

Introduction

PART ONE

Essays

IT HAS ALREADY BEEN OVER TEN YEARS since the Canadian Museum of Civilization presented *From the Heart*, its last major exhibition on folk art. With *les Paradis du monde*, we wanted to explore the idea of popular creation once again, this time focusing exclusively on Quebec. Our perspective here is different as well, because we have chosen the works from the collectors' point of view in an attempt to understand the reasoning that shapes these folk art collections. Consequently, we have abandoned thematic presentation in favour of a process that looks at the works in relation to their collection, representative of an ideology, an era—even of a way of collecting.

This book is laid out in two parts: the first section contains critical essays, while the second section is a presentation of selected works and excerpts from interviews with the artists. The simple strength of these narratives is every bit as informative and revealing as the learned theory of Part One.

Three people were asked to contribute to the first section. Mauro Peressini, Curator of the South-West European Programme of the Canadian Centre for Folk Studies at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, examines the polysemous nature of folk art, using the example of erotic works. In the process, he has given us a delightful assessment of current trends. Avant-garde Montreal Ceramicist Richard Millette tackles the problem posed by "kitsch" in both the fine arts and the so-called minor arts. Last, Paul Carpentier of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, well known in the museum world for his exhaustive study of wayside crosses, discusses the relationship between Marius Barbeau and "his" sculptors.

As for myself, I will look at what I feel is one of the most significant elements in constructing the field of folk art: the question of collection itself. This is followed by an analysis of the three collections which have in turn embodied Quebec folk art at the Museum: the collection of Marius Barbeau, which is resolutely traditional; the collection of English collectors, which reveals the outsider's perspective; and the collection of works by the *patenteux*, which has a contemporary outlook.

The second part of the work, with the actual catalogue, includes statements by the artists and the collectors. Three groups of artifacts illustrate the three major collections and the visions that underlie them. The description of the works brings us into contact with the tangible reality of the field. Here, the nature of the collections affects the style of the narratives. In the case of the *patenteux*, most of the statements came from interviews with the creators themselves, while in the other collections, the information has been filtered through the collectors.

I hope you will enjoy your journey into *les Paradis du monde*...

PASCALE GALIPEAU

Women and Sexuality in Folk Art:

The Curator's Dilemma

Mauro Peressini

"It's like market vendors. You want two breasts? Here you go! Two breasts coming up... what counts is that the man can see everything he wants on display. Then he'll put things into place himself, with his eyes."

Picasso, quoted in Nérét, G. *L'Érotisme en peinture*.
Paris, Nathan, 1990, p. 132

"—America is crazy about deconstruction. Why is that?"

—Well, I'm a bit of a deconstructionist myself. It's kind of exciting—the last intellectual thrill left. Like sawing through the branch you're sitting on.

—Exactly! It is so narcissistic. So 'opeless.

Lodge, D. *World. An Academic Romance*.
Middlesex, England, Penguin Books, 1984, p. 118.

Orgy

The popular imagination often conjures up the museum curator as an aging pipe smoker whose slow and sober gestures suggest a deep wisdom. But what most characterizes him is the solitude in which he works—he is commonly portrayed alone in a dimly lit office, surrounded by books and by the objects he contemplates. Naturally, this solitude is not exclusive to him alone; it is a characteristic frequently attributed to academics in general. However, the curator probably has more in common with scholars of natural science than with the social scientists. Because, while social scientists work with the words and behaviours of other human *subjects*, the curator, like the physicist or the chemist, is looking at things, at *objects*. He is alone not only in his work-space, but in his research as well. The objects he studies say nothing, do nothing. It is he, and he alone, who makes them move and speak. In some ways, he is a god—and who could be lonelier than a god?

Fortunately, this image popularized by novels, comics and movies is a mere fiction that can be easily replaced by others. Freud once said that when two people make love, there are at least six people in the room. For anyone who has had anything to do with the world of museum curators, this multiplication of personalities would seem far better adapted to the reality of the curator, especially when that curator is about to begin work on an exhibition. He can try seeking refuge in his office behind locked doors; he can try ignoring phone calls and avoiding his electronic mail; indeed, he can try behaving like any normal curator who so often drives his colleagues to distraction—but all his efforts will be in vain. He will never find himself alone. His

office will quickly fill up with a host of characters who never stop talking, asking questions, agreeing one minute only to argue angrily the next over this text, or that idea, or this or that section of the exhibit. Here I am not speaking about the tangible presence of designers, graphic artists, educators or administrators, for the office door is well and truly closed and the calls have all been forwarded. I am not even referring to the presence of those individuals in the curator's mind, the way he imagines them, for example, when he asks whether what he has written will please this person or annoy that one. No—the characters I am talking about, the ones that will constantly confuse him and challenge his ideas one by one, are of another sort altogether.

Take, for example, a proposal for an exhibition of a particularly delicate nature entitled "Women and Sexuality in Folk Art," whose point of departure is a group of erotic—perhaps even pornographic—artifacts (drawings, paintings, sculptures, miniatures) from the collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, dealing with women, their bodies and sexuality. The various individuals present in the curator's office will each have their own way of viewing this as an undertaking fraught with peril. There will be any number of pros and cons. Some will opt for saying and showing everything, others will want to avoid certain objects and certain subjects. But even among the latter there can be no consensus, for their interests in the exhibition's artifacts and themes will stem from a variety of motives, sometimes parallel or complementary, just as often contradictory or incompatible. The curator has to negotiate with everyone, and the debate will focus not just on the exhibition's orientation or the choice of sections and texts, but—more importantly—on the validity of the project itself. Why present an exhibition on these objects? This question will never leave the curator alone. As he grapples with the conflicting views of the host of characters who have invaded his office, the curator will have the horrible sensation that he has no choice but to accept and accommodate them all, even though some of them make him wish with all his heart that he were anywhere else... as is often the case in an orgy.

The Art of Definition

In the silence of his office, the *curator* contemplates photographs of the artifacts he plans to exhibit. He gives them a final glance and, satisfied but alert, he turns to his computer. He is well aware of the dangers of this act, but he decides nonetheless to begin to write: "Women..." He waits. Nothing happens. He continues: "and sexuality..." He listens. Still nothing. "Maybe this time will be different?" he thinks. Encouraged, he decides to end his sentence: "...in folk art." He closes his eyes, makes a wish, but alas! he can already hear a voice over his shoulder:

"Hang on there! Not so fast! Not so fast, if you don't mind!

In the space of a few seconds, you've already written four words. Don't you think you're being just a bit irresponsible? Words aren't meant to be used so lightly. You've got to be more serious than that! You've got to define those words. What are we talking about here? What's going to come under these labels?"

The first in a series of highly intellectual characters who are always ready to fight for abstract principles, the individual who has just spoken is well known to the *curator*, who fears him, not only because his obsession with clarity makes his presence harmful, but also because he is impossible to get away from the moment someone has something to say. Armed with his dictionaries and encyclopedias, the *positivist* is obsessed with the idea of labelling and classifying everything in his path, because for him, the world itself is so ordered, a book in which meaning has already been indelibly inscribed. And there he goes, already drawing up the inventory of the objects in the exhibition:

"What have we here?" he asks, peering at the photographs. "Here we have paintings that are more or less detailed, drawings and even quick sketches done on paper or the backs of envelopes. We have sculptures of various sizes, miniatures, dolls, some with articulate limbs, decorative inlays and reliefs on walking canes and shelf brackets. And what has been represented here?" he continues. "Men on their knees courting seated women, a sailor with his arms around his two 'girlfriends,' a man caressing a woman on his lap, couples, sometimes dressed, sometimes in bathing suits, kissing and hugging, pregnant women, the face of a blushing bride or of a heavily made-up woman grimacing and sticking out her tongue, mermaids, women in bikinis or in nothing at all, alone or at the beach, standing or kneeling, slim, blonde, smiling with their arms outstretched, naked women lying on their side as though they were posing for a painter, others just as naked in suggestive positions, voluptuous women wearing jewellery. We also have a topless dancer, breasts to the fore. And we have parts of the female anatomy in carvings—legs here, buttocks there..."

Imperturbable, the *positivist* patiently continues his list:

"We also have a variety of Eves, some classical, some based on fantasy, one whose sex is being caressed by the tongue of the snake. We've got couples making love in various positions, some of them with bodies that fit into each other and move. We've got scenes of fellatio and mutual masturbation, women masturbating alone, with or without accessories. Other women are chased by animals with their red tongues lolling, others still have their bathing suit bottoms torn off by animals. There are scenes of bestiality as well, women copulating with dogs..."

The *positivist* suddenly stops and looks around, as though just realizing that his scientific detachment might not be shared by everyone. Abandoning his description, he addresses the *curator*:

"All right, you've written 'art' in your title. So let's ask our-

selves: are these objects art? Can they be given that label? Are they part of that area of human activity? Because before you begin setting up your exhibit, we have to determine whether the material corresponds to what we want to talk about." And without awaiting a reply, he dives into his dictionaries and encyclopedias in search of parameters that will allow him to answer these questions.

This gives the *aesthete* a chance to make his appearance. The *curator* considers this new character to be somewhat simplistic. But he is drawn by this simplicity, for it enables him to offer seductive solutions that require little effort, no grounds and little research; solutions that allow the *curator* to remain in his office with his artifacts. For the *aesthete*, the response to the *positivist's* question is brief indeed:

"You want to know if this is art? Well! Don't make things so hard for yourself. Trust in the judgment and opinions of those with experience who, thanks to proper training and years of rubbing shoulders with works of art, have acquired the familiarity that enables them to find the answer in the objects themselves: in their aesthetic characteristics—their colours, shapes, composition, beauty and originality, their elegance and formal perfection, the techniques used, the degree of skill they demonstrate, the finesse of their fabrication—and in their expressive content, the themes embodied!"

"That's just it!" cries the *deconstructionist*.

Even though this character is a true spoilsport and an incurable pain, the *curator* is fond of him; he finds him amusing, and he admires his courage and perseverance.

"That's the point!" he exclaims, "Take all of that into account and what do you get? Nothing but a bunch of objects that are all different from each other. The *positivist's* description is the proof. And besides being very different in their aesthetics and their themes, these objects express highly different emotions, sometimes gay or playful, sometimes sad or aggressive. Even two very similar works have differences that it would be presumptuous to neglect. Take, for example, the women in bathing suits by Donald Boudreau or Lawrence Melanson—why put the accent on their similarities rather than on their differences, no matter how infinitesimal they might be: different colours, different poses, and so on?"

"Nonsense," retorts the *aesthete*, "the problem is that you deconstructionists don't know how to tell the difference between secondary characteristics and those which are truly fundamental and define personal style as well as genres, schools and periods."

"Aha!" exclaims the *deconstructionist* with an ironic smile, "so you think you can say what is fundamental and what isn't? We all know that all criteria are arbitrary."

"Are you questioning my training and my experience, which

have made me an expert and a connoisseur?" asks the *aesthete* with a challenging glare.

Then, in the friendlier tone of a professor who only wants what's best for his student, he turns to the *curator* and adds:

"Take my advice. The only criteria that are truly essential to the analysis are those we use to evaluate works of great art, official or academic art. Only by applying these well-established criteria can we assess any work coming from any other art form. All works must submit to the same treatment as official works, with no favouritism allowed; the only way we can separate the wheat from the chaff is by considering them all as official works of art, and not trying to salvage them by attributing a utilitarian value or any social or cultural significance."

So saying, the *aesthete* bends over the photographs, adjusting his little round glasses on the end of his nose:

"Certainly," he continues, "if we consider the themes dealt with in these works, everything relates them to art. Has not woman been one of the most important, not to mention the most stimulating subjects and sources of inspiration for artists throughout the ages? And that goes even more for sex and eroticism! Without these themes, what would Rubens, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Fragonard, Goya, Ingres, Bouguereau, Manet, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Dali and countless others have done? There is no doubt that in taking on the themes of women and eroticism, the artists of the works we have here have made art. But having said this, if we go beyond these thematic criteria and look at the particular way they have been dealt with and the aesthetics of the works, things become less clear. Everything seems to point to a consideration of these objects as a group of specific characteristics. Without any doubt, they express a particular way of dealing with women and sex that distinguishes them from great art. Consequently, I wonder whether the use of the term 'art' in the title is really appropriate."

"Bravo! Now we're getting somewhere! We're not talking about art here, we're talking about folk art. Let's not mix genres, if you don't mind!"

The individual who just spoke moves towards the centre of the room, smiling and sure of himself, dressed in a business suit and a trendy bow-tie. On seeing him, the *curator*, discouraged, hides his face in his hands. The *elitist* is an insufferable snob and an art dandy, and although the *curator* cannot bear him, he cannot get rid of him. For the *elitist*, art serves above all to distinguish him from the common man. While the artist does so through creation, the *elitist* thinks he can achieve the same status in the guise of an informed consumer of art, through his knowledge and his sensitivity, which he believes allow him to appreciate the works as can only a select few—those who are in communion with the creative genius. Naturally, then, the stance of the *aesthete* suits the *elitist*. Only official art can serve as the absolute refer-

ence point for evaluating all other forms of creation. He is entirely in agreement with the *aesthete's* conclusion that we must distinguish between the objects for the exhibition and real works of art. But he would take the conclusion further still: not only does he believe that these objects are not art, he maintains they are minor creations, of less value, marked by their humble origins. According to the *elitist*, not only should the proposed title be dropped, but the very idea of an exhibit of such vulgar objects should be abandoned.

"Look at these objects, he says, you can see that many of them are no more than the result of random combinations of an odd assortment of elements, the fruit of fantasy, of an association of shapes and ideas reproduced haphazardly as they appeared in the minds of those who created them. Take, for example, the *Venus 6* by this... by Claude Pierre Luneau. Look at these two caged men wrestling, their genitals prominently displayed, while in a sphere above the cage stands a naked woman with her arms raised to the skies. How could we possibly consider this to be anything else but idiosyncratic tinkering? It has nothing in common with true works of art, which within each period can be situated within an artistic process, the outcome of centuries of research by artists in the great tradition. Besides, just look at these bodies—often they are squat, graceless, with no detail or subtlety. Take the example of this naked woman by Collins Eisenhauer, seated in a chair with a swan caressing her sex with its beak. Naturally we think of the myth of Leda that so many famous artists have illustrated. But how can we speak in the same breath of this object—produced by Eisenhauer in a naive style that gives us no development of the myth, no indication of culture, merely a stocky and approximate figure of a woman—and of the sophisticated, cultivated Ledas of the art world, with the Ledas of Veronese or Leonardo da Vinci? Come now, you can't deny that those were the work of professionals, while these are the stuff of amateurs. Or just look at these vulgar drawings of women copulating or masturbating. They're more akin to rough sketches than painting. You don't really intend to call this art, do you? Don't try telling me that this is anything but backyard art, home-made art that has nothing to do with studio art. One can always find a certain rough charm or appeal in these works, but only because of their childlike simplicity, the lack of critical reflection and complex messages that characterize them. Where, in these couples interlocked as though they were toys, do we find the slightest trace of the formal aesthetic concerns that characterize true artists and art critics? I'm sorry, but what we have here is trivial art whose message is uninteresting, uninspiring, and quite frankly vulgar. No, believe me, you should abandon this project, and if you really want an exhibition on women and sexuality, look to high art; it will provide you with a wealth of material."

These statements enrage an ordinary, rather glum individual

who the *curator* is particularly fond of because of his heroic nature, his idealism and the hopelessness of the causes he embraces. The *left-wing intellectual* is a radical anti-*elitist*. If he had been a tad more impulsive, he would have physically assaulted the *elitist*—but he prefers to let him finish, and to engage in rational combat.

"I believe we would be making a serious mistake if we took your advice," he says to the *elitist*. "Your statements are not motivated by any love of art, but by love of yourself. For you, art is merely a means of attaining your own selfish goals. It is no more than an instrument with which you hope to attain a higher social status so that you can look down on others. You take advantage of the great value that western societies have always placed on the luxuries of leisure and consumerism. You profit from the fact that art combines these two qualities, and that we imbue both art and its specialists with spiritual, almost religious properties. To abandon the exhibition for the reasons you mention would only serve to confirm your sense of superiority. On the contrary, I believe that this exhibition is entirely justified and whether you like it or not, it should use these objects to show that these works are every bit as valid as those of official art, and that the ordinary people who produced them are capable of creative activity that is every bit as rich and meaningful as that of the great artists. Whatever you might think, *semiosis*—the ability to transform experience into systems of cohesive significance—is not the exclusive domain of a privileged or elite class. It is universal. You dismiss Claude Pierre Luneau's *Venus 6* as a piece of meaningless handiwork. Can't you see that on the contrary, it constitutes a profound and critical reflection on the masculine condition? Does not the caging of these two men fighting for a woman represent this condition as a sentence, an imprisonment? And the woman on top of the cage—isn't that a critical reference to the idealization of woman that men so often tend toward? You spoke of the absence of aesthetic concerns in these works. Perhaps you should look more closely at the faces of George Cockayne's women. And as far as the obscene sketches you despise are concerned, don't we find them in the works of several of your great artists? Didn't Gustave Courbet draw a celebrated close-up of a woman's sex called *L'Origine du monde*? And what about the pornographic drawings in the private sketchbooks of Ingres or Millet? Besides, your entire argument is based on a false opposition between professional and cultivated art on one hand, and the creations of naive amateurs on the other. In reality, that doesn't hold water. In their time, weren't Douanier Rousseau and Paul Gauguin naive artists without professional training? And what about all the artists who are 'non-professional,' but who frequented art schools and painters' studios? The purpose of this exhibition should be to give people a better understanding of the art of ordinary people, going beyond the

elitist dichotomies that blind us. At the same time, it could serve as a criticism of official art and the class distinctions that artistic status imposes even as it imprisons us within sterile power struggles."

A burst of laughter is heard at this point. It comes from the *deconstructionist*, who is as amused by the arguments of the *elitist* as he is by those of the *left-wing intellectual*.

"You're both being slightly ridiculous. Your case," he says to the *elitist*, "can be easily settled. Just like the *aesthete*, everything you say is based on the hypothetical existence of absolute criteria that serve to distinguish forms of creation and organize them into some form of hierarchy. But we know that all those experts' criteria are only value judgments that have no foundation whatsoever apart from the will of their proponents. They are no more and no less valid than any other set of criteria."

Then, turning to the *left-wing intellectual*, he continues:

"Your case, on the other hand, is more complex, albeit just as ridiculous. Despite your good intentions, you remain a prisoner of the rules of the official art game, even though you seem to want to contest its hegemony. Not only are the criteria you propose for valorizing the works of the exhibit every bit as arbitrary, but what's more, you suggest the use of the very standards that define this high art. This is the end result of all your efforts to show how the works here attain those standards of excellence. And further: even if you rightly criticize the way the *elitist* uses art for social distinction, aren't you yourself using folk art to give yourself a privileged social status? Ultimately, doesn't your attraction to folk art and the work of the people serve to distinguish you from all those who discredit these humble offerings, and set you apart from the middle classes, who value only those works acknowledged as great art, even though they aren't capable of becoming experts? Isn't your appreciation of the folk aesthetic a way of setting yourself apart from the social climbers and nouveaux riches that you despise so much? Besides, isn't your paternalistic attitude in looking at the work of the common people in order to validate it a way of proving how sensitive you are, of flaunting your ability to discern 'beauty' where others—quite often the creators themselves—don't see it? Aren't you using your recognition of the hidden genius in these objects to promote your own? Doesn't all this allow you to proclaim yourself an 'expert,' an 'appraiser,' or even a 'collector,' endowing yourself with the power to give aesthetic value to human productions and thus set yourself apart from common mortals? Of course, what is in your favour is the fact that you do most of this unconsciously, unlike the *elitist*. But precisely because of that, your approach is even less honest and more pernicious than his."

The *deconstructionist* pauses for a moment, contemplating the defeated expression on the *left-wing intellectual's* face. Then he concludes:

"In any case, it would be absurd to try to justify or condemn the exhibit on the basis of the artistic nature of the objects, for everyone is entitled to their own opinion and all definitions are equally valid. Unless, of course, the purpose of the exhibition is to poke fun at the way all these people take this defining game so seriously..."

The Human As Object

Encouraged by this conclusion, the *anthropologists* decide to make an appearance. For them, the arguments of the *positivist*, the *aesthete*, the *elitist* and the *left-wing intellectual* are all based on the erroneous principle that the objects speak for themselves, and that only they can tell us what they really are. For this new group, human beings are what make the objects speak, and they alone can give them a meaning, a value, an interpretation. Objects are mute, and we can make them say what we want. Consequently, they are convinced that to decide to go on with or to abandon the exhibit on the basis of the more or less artistic character expressed by the artifacts makes no sense, for they express nothing on their own, no identity, no meaning. And that is because art or any act of creation is not a sphere or dimension that can be divorced from the human beings who engage in its production. Art or creation exist only because there are human beings who produce the objects (artists, creators) and others who consume them (buyers, collectors, art dealers, art critics, art historians and so on); all of them calling the object of their attention 'art.' Art and creation cannot be elevated above history and the people who make it. For this group, then, the purpose of the exhibition should be to show viewers the human beings hidden behind the objects.

Along these lines, the *individualist anthropologist* takes the floor. For this somewhat wordy and excessive Frenchman, the artifacts must be considered as products of the individual imaginary universes of their authors, and these universes are what the exhibit should show the public.

"Of course," he explains, "this doesn't apply to official art, since those creators have had to conform to artistic traditions, established canons and academic ideals that can be traced from ancient Greece through to the avant-garde of the twentieth century. But the situation is altogether different for folk art. Folk artists are most often self-taught, 'outsiders,' non-conformists who operate outside the prescribed and established traditions of art; they are creators with a rare, innate sense of creation that has been left untouched by the rules of art and aesthetic conventions. This holds even more true when we're dealing with folk artists who work on subjects that are as personal, private and intimate as eroticism, sexuality or pornography. Look at the objects in these photographs. Much mention has been made of Luncheon's

Venus 6—could there be any better example of unique handicraft, born of personal fantasy? And this naked woman by Seton J. Tompkins, crowned and covered in jewellery, with a round metal disk on the tip of each breast: don't we have here a purely individual invention, the product of some private dream? The same goes for the various scenes of bestiality painted or carved by Collins Eisenhauer. What personal fears do they express? And this scene of copulation, carved by the same artist, with a child who seems to be sharing in his parents' love-making—is this the echo of painful memory, or does it express a personal perversion? As for the women's heads by Cockayne, should they not be seen as doorways into the imaginary universe of their author? These and other objects are evidently examples of pure creation, radical, immediate, spontaneous and free invention."

Even though he agrees with the *individualist anthropologist* in the opposition of folk art and academic art as two highly different sorts of creation, the *traditionalist anthropologist*, a severe-looking American, doesn't like what he's just heard. While for the *individualist*, the opposition between folk art and official art corresponds to an opposition between a free form of creation and one marked by the constraints of high tradition, the *traditionalist anthropologist* establishes the opposition conversely: for him, official art responds to the principle of creative innovation at all costs, while folk art, on the contrary, is an activity characterized by a respect for the collective values of the group to which the artist belongs. Meticulous about defining the field of research of his discipline, he feels the need to clarify the matter:

"Much as I dislike having to go back to the question of definition, I feel obliged to do so because of the *individualist's* remarks, which, if we follow them through, make folk art a catch-all into which we can throw anything. Contrary to what he propounds, all my research experience has shown me that true folk art is the domain of what we should call folk artists. This is an important detail, for here the word 'folk' designates these individuals' membership within 'folk communities' as defined by anthropologist Robert Redfield: small local and rural communities where tradition, principally oral, is informally transmitted from generation to generation, naturally with a few modifications and adaptations that bring it in line with individual desires and styles introduced from outside, but without profound structural changes. And—unless we have a very strange idea of what constitutes a folk society—we cannot consider these artists who are known as outsiders, isolated, marginal and non-conformist—all these self-taught creators—in the same category as folk artists. For after all, tell me how folk art can logically be defined as both the art of a group and the art of self-taught artists? A folk society is not a collection of deviants. What characterizes a folk individual is not only his membership in this type of community, but also the fact that he is socially and culturally defined by it, that he is imbued

with its tradition, with its ethical and religious principles. Folk artists are individuals who have acquired their manual and intellectual skills, and integrated the rules of production sanctioned by the community, by communicating with other members of the community. Their production, in fact, is largely determined by the standards of the community, via the church, the family and other institutions that have their say in what is or is not acceptable. Creations that spring directly from the artist's imagination, without precedents in the collective production, are merely exceptions to the rule, for small communities generally offer little room for the creation of radically new forms. The general rule is modesty and conservatism in innovation, for one is more highly appreciated for the role one plays within the group than for personal inventiveness. That's why folk art is essentially repetitive, like good quality, dependable craftwork. I don't see how works of folk art can be considered as products of irreducible individualism. Through the work of folk artists, it is the community, the collective and its traditions that are expressed, not the individuals. Perhaps that explains the large number of anonymous works..."

"Then what do you make of the exhibition that concerns us here?" asks the *individualist anthropologist*.

"Quite simply, I think the exhibition should show the public the community expressing itself in these artifacts, and not the individual psychological universes that you postulate."

"Excuse me, but I don't understand," replies the *individualist*. "I don't think you realize the incompatibility of your argument and our project."

"Oh really? And how is that?"

"Well, look. If that is really your idea of folk art, then there can be no exhibition at all, because the vast majority of the artifacts that have been chosen, since they refer to women, their bodies, sexuality and eroticism, are forcibly excluded from your definition. Your notion of folk art can correspond to a certain type of production that represents more traditional images of women. We can assuredly include, under your definition of folk art, representations of women carrying out their traditional tasks, such as the numerous miniatures carved by Fred Moulding where women look after children, do housework, laundry or sewing; women gardening or cooking, baking bread, making butter, and so forth. Here, thanks to its artists, the traditional community is furnished with images of itself and of the position of the women within it. In the same way, your definition of folk art can include representations of love, insofar as they respect religious and moral standards: scenes of chaste kisses, weddings, countless couples, like those carved by Arthur Flett, Erskine Brown, Robert McTavish, Seton Tompkins or William Stefanchuk: couples seated in a cart, looking straight ahead, as though contemplating the road that conjugal morality has paved

for them. We could even incorporate certain representations of Adam and Eve within your conception of folk art, just as long as they refer to an aspect of the Christian traditions of the kind of communities you're talking about. Careful though, not all of them would be suitable! Take the example of the Adam and Eve by Alphonse Grenier, where the two characters are dressed in contemporary clothing and vivid colours. There's nothing very traditional here, and everything leads us to see this work as a purely individual creation. And what are we to make of Collins Eisenhower's Adams and Eves, where the snake caressing the woman is a very personal erotic interpretation of the biblical scene? Whether you like it or not, these cases, just like most of the other erotic or pornographic objects that concern us here, fall outside your definition of "folk art," for it is impossible to discern the reproduction of the values central to the western folk community of which you speak. Unless, of course, we were to have a very bizarre, libidinous, sexually obsessed vision of these communities, which would be absurd, since on the contrary, if we are to go by your description of them, they are exactly the opposite: marked by a whole series of sexual taboos that are broached only by eccentrics or in private, in hiding, as is the case in most traditional western societies. Your proposal—to show the public how these objects reflect the artists' communities—simply doesn't hold water, since most of the artifacts show no trace whatsoever of a collective presence. Quite the contrary, they express values that oppose the community, and individual intentions towards which, if you don't mind my saying, you show a somewhat moralistic and condescending attitude when you call their authors 'deviant.'

"I won't prevent you from having your exhibition," answers the *traditionalist anthropologist*, "go ahead if you feel like it, but don't pretend that it's an exhibit of folk art!"

"All right, I think it's time I stepped in..."

The individual who has just come into the discussion is the *contemporary anthropologist*. For him, the *individualist* and the *traditionalist* have once again fallen into the trap of defining folk art, even if they've tried to redirect the discussion toward the human context of the artifacts.

"When are we finally going to realize that definition is impossible?" he begins. "Neither individualism nor the respect of values central to the group are criteria that specifically define folk art or distinguish it from academic art. Both folk art and official art have their own constraints. Naturally, in the case of folk art these come from church, family and leaders and therefore tend to be more informal, while in the case of official art, the constraints imposed by schools, academies and museums are necessarily more formal. But these are not natural differences, particularly since with the growing popularity of folk art today, we see the appearance of constraints that are increasingly similar to those of academic art coming from professional collectors, antique dealers, museums and the like. As for individual originality, we find it in both forms of creation. Let's admit once and for all that official art and folk art are both social fields, areas of activity in which human beings adopt rules that allow room for innovation, of course, but which nonetheless must be respected if we want to play the game."

The *contemporary anthropologist* pauses. Then, turning to the *traditionalist*, he continues:

"Let's start with you. Honestly now, don't tell me you believe that now, at the end of the 20th century, your 'folk society' is still a valid concept for an understanding of western societies, or even of contemporary societies in general. Admit that it is no more than a researcher's construct. How can one imagine that autonomous, self-sufficient communities can still exist with their values, traditions and ethical or religious principles intact, when the individuals within them are today linked more than ever to a larger society on the national or global scale via thousands of institutions, and communications and media that inundate them with material for the imagination? You must agree that for all practical purposes, your folk societies have disappeared, and that today it is virtually impossible to conceive of individuals who are not affected by the values of industrial and post-industrial society."

The *contemporary anthropologist* bends over the photographs for a moment before going on:

"Look at these works: several of them attest to the influences of the mass culture of our societies. In both the colours and the clothing worn by the characters, Alphonse Grenier's *Adam and Eve* is a work firmly grounded in contemporary culture. The same goes for the topless dancer by this unknown artist. What proof have we got that the various erotic scenes shown by the couples who make love in all sorts of positions were not inspired by mass-produced pornographic films, by television or by specialized books and magazines? Hasn't George Cockayne already mentioned that he leafed through *Playboy* and *National Geographic* for inspiration for his women? And don't the bathing beauties by Donald Boudreau, Lawrence Melanson, A.L. Kent, Arthur Flett and other anonymous artists reproduce the exact style of the pin-ups that were so popular in magazines and posters during the 1950s? Don't we have a perfect example here of work directly inspired by industrial products? These objects cannot be excluded from the exhibition on the pretext—as the *traditionalist* would have it—that they show no trace of a society or a culture. Perhaps they don't display the local, traditional society that he dreams of, but society and culture are present nonetheless: the current, contemporary society and culture in which we live and on which the exhibition should focus."

Without giving the *traditionalist* a chance to reply, the *contem-*

porary anthropologist turns to the *individualist* now and continues:

"As for you, your explanation of the work as the result of the creative genius of the individual only echoes a good number of those art historians who want to dismiss any societal influence in the creative process. If we restrict ourselves to folk art, it may be true that part of what is produced by this form of creation can be seen as a type of cultural protest. But this is by no means a protest made by individuals who are free of all cultural influence; this is not the struggle of the individual against an oppressive society. If there is a struggle, it's that of one cultural form against another; the culture of the elite, so dear to cultural institutions and art historians, being challenged by the culture of ordinary people who sometimes present, admittedly, a greater variety of currents that are also more subject to change, more open to outside influence and consequently less traditional, more inventive and improvisational—more unpredictable, in fact. But important though the originality of the works may be, it is absurd to describe their authors as totally self-taught individuals who are completely cut-off from the cultural currents that surround them. Even your friends, the theorists of the so-called '*art brut*', have to admit that madness is also a social product that varies from society to society, both in its definition and its signs, symptoms and content. It has to be admitted once and for all that every human being, without exception, is a social individual, and that all activity—even the most unrestrained artistic activity requires, if not specific technical and symbolic training, as well as social relations of production and consumption, then, at the very least, an author who has lived, and thus has a past filled with people who have influenced him for better or worse."

Turning to the *curator*, whose expression has been growing increasingly anguished throughout the debate, he goes on:

"The exhibit should show how these social influences can be discerned in the artifacts, while specifying how the influence of society and culture on individuals, in a mass society like our own, differs from that which exists in a folk society. In small traditional communities, people were subject to ethical or religious traditions, values and principles that were relatively explicit and unequivocal, since they were imparted by a small number of institutions which maintained a general consensus in all saying basically the same thing. In our more complex societies that are composed of a multitude of cultures and sub-cultures, varied professional groups, hierarchical social classes and multiple institutions, a host of messages circulate that are sometimes complementary, but often contradictory. As a result, the contemporary individual is living in a double state: influenced in his imagination by all of these messages, he also enjoys a freedom of selection and interpretation that enable him to use this social material to redesign his own imaginary universe. The objects we're dealing with here, just like a certain proportion of folk art, are an expression of this

social influence as well as of the freedom with which the individual orders the chaos of messages that assail him in order to make sense of it all."

"So you admit," says the *individualist anthropologist*, "that these are strictly individual works, all the more so in that such themes as woman, eroticism or sexuality refer to fantasy, the most personal part of us all."

"No, no! You're oversimplifying what I'm trying to say," retorts the *contemporary anthropologist*. "Even those activities that seem the most personal to us have a social and cultural component, for what we are using when we think, talk or act is always material that is socially produced, by or with other individuals, groups or institutions. All we do is tinker more or less inventively with what society has given us. Indeed, even when we make love or fantasize, we use social models seen or experienced elsewhere. We can't get away from it—we're always inhabited by the society that has produced us and in which we live."

Then, as though considering that he has wasted enough time in a debate he considers definitively over, he turns away from the *individualist* and adopts a more solemn tone:

"For a proper demonstration of the simultaneous presence of society and the individual in these objects, the exhibit should show the public the contexts of production and consumption of these works, as we would do for any other type of object. For their production, we should sketch the social portrait of the creators, describe their social relations and their relationships to both the community and to art. Did they attend schools and museums, did they read art books or did they know nothing at all about art? We also have to show the concrete process of production, the way these creators were organized to produce, either alone or in groups. And we have to understand how they perceived their work: do they make the distinction between themselves and official artists, or do they consider themselves artists in their own right? As well, we need to describe their imaginary universe, the social sources of their models and the role of the media, pornographic films, magazines, society's aesthetic trends, the ideals and canons of physical perfection, public morality regarding women and sex, their personal experience with tangible, beloved women, with wives or lovers. Further, we should attempt to describe their motivations. Did they want to rebel against society's taboos? Did they have a bone to pick with religion? Or were their goals more personal? The exhibition should look at the issue of the consumption of the works in the same way; it should give us a social definition of the consumers, their links with the producers and their influence on the production. Then, we need to look at the function of these works for those who purchase them. What purpose do they serve? In what way are they useful?"

"That's precisely what distinguishes folk art from great art!"

exclaims the *elitist*. "We all know that only folk art can have a utilitarian aspect. And it's precisely the freedom from any sort of usefulness that gives great art its superior value."

"There you go, spouting nonsense once again," replies the *contemporary anthropologist*. "Even works meant only for contemplation, as your works of 'great art' pretend to be, have a usefulness which is that very contemplation. Even pure signs have a useful purpose: they convey meaning, they signify. But we also know that works of art have more prosaic functions such as allowing us to distinguish ourselves socially, either by making them the subject of our erudite discourse or by simply hanging them on our walls. You of all people must be aware of that! So it is entirely appropriate to ask, both for works of official art and for works called 'folk art,' what social role they played for their owners before taking on their museum role. Did they serve a private, aesthetic, ritual, material or symbolic purpose? Did they provide some kind of release, did they alleviate frustration or keep old memories alive, did they make life sweeter, ardour more ardent, dreams more colourful? Were they kept for private, solitary use or did they have a collective function, providing amusement between men or close friends who were asserting their virility; did they serve to entertain or to provoke, to incite reaction?"

The *contemporary anthropologist* speaks more quickly towards the end of his speech, for he glimpses the approach of a grey-garbed, cynical-looking fellow whom he knows to be extremely lucid and efficient.

"The problem," begins the *realist*, "is that your vast programme is greater than the means that are available to you. We're talking about an exhibition, not a book. You could never include all your complex notions unless you filled the gallery space with interminable texts. An exhibition calls for simple, concise messages. And whether you like it or not, you'll have to make do with the objects that are available to you, objects which were collected by others before you, with objectives that were different from your own. It would come as a great surprise to me if you found all the information you need to respond to your countless questions contained in the documentation relating to these objects. As you can see for yourself, a large number of these works were acquired by non-anthropologists and from antique dealers, which does not bode well for documentation. For the rest, if we can find excerpts from interviews with their authors, or even excellent monographs such as Stephen Inglis's on George Cockayne³, we would still be unlikely to find all the information you need on each object, for the simple reason that such was not the goal of those researchers who preceded you. You're trapped, my friend. The objects say nothing on their own. Thus you need discourse, meanings, significance, but all of this is missing."

Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex...

The *realist's* remarks have the effect of a roadsign announcing a dead end. A feeling of discomfort combined with annoyance pervades the office of the *curator*, who is feeling more and more desperate by the minute. A number of persons who have felt unconcerned by the debate up until now take advantage of the pause to intervene. For them, the debate so far has centred on folk art, on the human beings behind the objects and the social phenomena they translate, but until now almost nothing has been said about the very themes by which these works have been grouped: sexuality, eroticism, women. All the justifications that have been given for the exhibition so far and all the objectives set for it could just as easily apply to any set of objects. According to these new characters, what's needed to justify the presentation of these specific objects is to show the public what they tell us about sexuality, eroticism and women in folk art.

The first of this group to speak is an individual of simple but effective ideas, a tempestuous man who is full of energy, even though the *curator* finds that he's showing signs of age. For the *provocateur*, the exhibition can be easily justified:

"You have to see it as being an element that is part of a greater process of freeing up sexual discourse, and sexuality itself, from all of the taboos that weigh it down, from the repression and the suffocating social constraints that still prevail. For the liberation of sexuality is a political project whose goal is a greater freedom of expression, thus a greater democracy. The exhibit should fight the lies and hypocritical conventions, the cultural masquerades of the Victorian morality that still rule us today. It should be a struggle against the sexual prohibitions that help make our societies collections of sexual neurotics. Via these objects, we have to shock the bourgeoisie and scandalize polite society with the strong emotions that are the only ones appropriate for a discourse on sex, if we want to speak honestly, without hypocrisy. Those who claim that sexuality is a threat to society or to the family unit are actually hiding their real fears of the disappearance of a dominant mode of sexual control and the current organization of relations between men and women, not to mention the social organization of reproduction and even the basic units of economic production."

He stops to catch his breath, as if surprised by his impassioned speech. Then, more calmly, he continues:

"More specifically, these erotic and pornographic works of folk art are valuable because they show what we have rarely, perhaps never seen—that dimension of folk art that contradicts the stereotypes of the genre. Haven't we had enough of presenting folk art as a nice, harmless art whose favourite subjects are nature, birds and animals, as an art that conveys chaste traditions and the virtues of family, religion and community? How many exhibits have presented this other facet—more daring, but real

nonetheless—of folk art? Very few. This omission and the tendency to present only what is tame in folk art merely helps to shape a false idea of this form of creation. Folk art is still approached in the same manner as the official art of the Christian Middle Ages which outlawed the nude."

"I couldn't agree more!" exclaims the *individualist anthropologist*, "especially since these sexual works bring out what I consider to be one of the most representative aspects of folk art: its marginality and its challenge to the central values of society..."

"But it's for that very reason that I say this is not folk art at all," interrupts the *traditionalist anthropologist*.

The *contemporary anthropologist* breaks in:

"Whether it's folk art or not isn't the question. These are objects produced by human beings, and that is enough to make them interesting..."

The debate among these characters would doubtless have begun anew if the *sexual cynic*, an individual marked by an enormous world-weariness, had not intervened.

"I'll leave it to you to decide whether or not these objects are interesting," he sighed, "but one thing is certain: the remarks of the *provocateur* are totally out of date. To hear him go on, you'd think we were back in the sixties. How can you possibly consider sex as something repressed that needs to be liberated, in an era of Madonna and the explosion of pornography that shows us almost everything imaginable? What could be more banal, these days, then to talk about or exhibit sex? What could be more commonplace than exhibitionism or nakedness? In the world of art it's even more banal; it's become the standard, almost obligatory. In art, we've shown everything to such an extent—nakedness has become so normal—that we can only agree with Georges Duby that "the nude in art no longer really exists."⁴ The project the *provocateur* proposes already self-destructed a long time ago, because in the process of constantly fighting against constraints and constantly wanting to tell all and show all, we only succeed in endlessly surpassing ourselves in an inexorable process that makes everything become banal. We become so saturated that the inevitable result is disappointment and sexual burn-out. Take the history of the pin-up as an example. In the 1950s, this was a new and eminently erotic image of women. Then what happened? It began to disappear in the mid-sixties, partly because of growing public acceptance of the nude, partly because of the increasingly widespread distribution of erotic and obscene products that helped create a new morality encouraging a more permissive sexuality. The pin-up ceased to be an erotic image, and we had to go farther. Actually, the *provocateur's* statements on sex, far from being liberating, are in reality a rather conformist position nowadays. What would really be revolutionary and subversive would be to take the opposite attitude and demonstrate a sense of modesty."

"But sex is still a subject that scandalizes, since censorship condemns it in a variety of ways," protests the *provocateur*.

"For a society, a true limit that cannot be transgressed, something truly unthinkable, doesn't need to be enforced by censorship. To take the example of Arcand's once again, do our western societies forbid us to eat spiders? No—yet nobody does. That is a true taboo. That is a limit which, if transgressed, would constitute a true scandal. But sex? today? Come on! It only scandalizes those who need scandal. It's everywhere! The exhibition you propose doesn't challenge society in the slightest. Today, the defenders of sexual liberation as well as those who study it and those who condemn it all equally agree that sex is important and primordial, whether as an essential act of instinct and identity or as a privileged act of perdition and sin. Even the pornography industry tells us it's the only thing that matters. No, believe me, what would really be scandalous would be to mount an exhibition whose message was that sex is not very important, that sex is boring, that we don't need it, that it plays no essential role. With a message like that, believe me, you'd upset most of the western artistic tradition and modern psychology in one fell swoop."

"Do you mind if I speak?"

The voice we've just heard is that of the *voyeur*, a polite, discreet, generally taciturn individual. Even while speaking, he continues to look out the window, absorbed by who knows what spectacle. With his back turned to the others, as it has been since the beginning of the discussion, he continues:

"What the *sexual cynic* says perhaps makes sense, but the fact remains that it is pleasant to look at certain images, certain objects. Without trying to explain the attraction we feel for certain bodies, certain people or certain scenes, and over and above the revolutionary projects of the *provocateur* or the lassitude of the *sexual cynic*, wouldn't it be more honest to accept this simple truth, and to base the exhibit on the uncomplicated pleasure we derive from seeing these objects, these naked bodies, these voluptuous breasts and tender buttocks, the sight of these couples giving in to their most intimate fantasies? The public might not admit it, but what will surely attract it above all is not to learn something new about art, folk art, the individuals who created these objects, their communities, modern society or sex. No—their main motivation in coming to the exhibition will be the hope that these objects will give them pleasure, stimulate their senses, offer them pleasant images. Furthermore, if your problem really is to try and find some justification for an exhibition, ask yourselves the following: what can an exhibition offer that can't be obtained through other means, such as writing, for example? The answer is simple: objects. What is specific to an exhibition is that it shows objects. Without them and without the voyeurism that they make possible, an exhibition cannot compete with writing in dealing

with the themes of art, folk art, artistic creation, communities, contemporary society or sex. An exhibition's strength lies in the viewing."

"No, no, no! We cannot reduce it to that, that is too dangerous!" exclaims the *concerned citizen*, a nervous, anxious individual. "The *voyeur* is blind, an irresponsible person who doesn't see all the dangers hidden behind these images of women, copulation and bestiality. Don't worry, I'm not a moralizing Christian. But we do have to realize that all objects and all images do more than simply represent a particular thing, reality, society or the given customs of such and such an individual or group. These objects and images *create* reality—ways of conceiving of sex, women, bodies, and relationships between individuals. Thus they can influence people in their behaviour and ideas. What is being proposed here is an exhibition of all sorts of dangers. I repeat, I'm not saying that the objects are good or bad in themselves. What concerns me are the consequences that showing these objects and images will have."

Then, addressing each of those present in turn, as if desperately seeking reassurance, the *concerned citizen* continues:

"Some claim that just as ideas determine behaviour, images incite action. What do you think? Doesn't pornography give us models that are then imitated in reality? Apparently, certain studies in experimental psychology show that violent pornography alters the attitude of men by making them more tolerant of rape or more aggressive and more contemptuous toward women. This is the sort of saturation that desensitizes us. More generally, does not pornography have the effect of making our everyday life seem rather dull by making us believe that everybody except us is gaily having unbridled sex? Shouldn't we be fighting against all of the lies propagated about sex, about the possibility of making love an infinite number of times, about the size of male sex organs, about the possibility of copulating mechanically, without feelings, emotions or consequences?"

"I think you need a holiday, my old good fellow," responds the *liberal humanist*, a man who is obviously at peace with himself. "I don't know if it's just because you're overtaxed, but in any case, you have a somewhat paranoid view of the world around you. The sexual liberation that pornography participates in, and which our exhibition could contribute to, as the *provocateur* has demonstrated, entails a number of positive aspects. It constitutes a liberalization of mores, a tool against ignorance and for the sexual realization of individuals. You quote psychological studies. I can quote others that would show that pornography is an evasion through fantasizing that calms the passions of potential criminals, that acts as a safety valve against crime. Sexual repression is what leads to rape, sadism and other forms of violence. Indeed, most studies show that we don't find any more rapists among consumers of pornography than we do among

those who never look at the stuff. You know, the truly violent or psychopathic are not much interested by the fiction of pornography. What interests them is reality—real violence. And in any case, you seem to be referring to violent pornography. But don't you realize that this type of pornography is only an infinite fraction of the total printed or filmed production, and that the vast majority presents consenting individuals who are happy to be doing what they're doing? That is what we find in these objects. The pin-ups of Boudreau, Melanson, Flett, Kent and Tomkins all seem to offer themselves to our eyes with a smile. The love-making couples by Eisenhauer, Flett and McClelland show no signs of reluctance. Even certain scenes of bestiality by Eisenhauer suggest consent on the woman's part.

"In any event," intervenes the *deconstructionist*, "it is clear that we could quote endlessly from studies on the effects of pornography on human behaviour. It is also clear that in the conclusions of these studies we could find as many arguments in support of the position of the *concerned citizen* as we could in favour of the *liberal humanist*. But it is entirely normal that there are conflicting views on the subject. The contrary would be astonishing. What all these different results show us is that, just as with any other product, pornography has different effects depending on the individuals it touches: an incitement to rape or a release from frustration; teaching us to make love or cheapening reality and real partners; it can stimulate, entertain, amuse or bore us. It can have all these effects because the individuals who receive it are all different, with diverse life histories that have made them psychologically different."

"But there still remains one danger that we cannot dismiss," interjects the *concerned sociologist*, a man whose severe expression nonetheless betrays a certain generosity. "Voyeurism and pornography in general contribute to the social dissolution that characterizes our contemporary societies, and the exhibition envisaged by the *voyeur* cannot help but lead us in that direction."

Seeing that the *voyeur* won't turn around, as though the discussion no longer concerned him, the *concerned sociologist* decides to address the others:

"What, in effect, is the type of human relationship implied by voyeurism? It is a relation between two people—the woman who displays herself and the man who watches—between whom not only does nothing happen, but no relationship is possible. For what pornography and voyeurism tell us is that watching is enough, that a tangible relationship with someone else employing other senses is not only secondary, but even risky and to be avoided. Through this non-relationship, pornography and voyeurism tell us that the most satisfactory pleasures, because they are the safest, are the solitary ones. All of this is obviously accentuated by the prevailing individualism that contemporary pornography and voyeurism exult in, the attitude that trans-

forms any of the compromises or concessions that are necessary in any human relationship into something unbearable. In this context, solitary sexuality takes on a supreme value. Just think of the whole trend in sexology that praises masturbation as the only truly authentic sexual activity. And look at the statistics that show a loss of sexual appetite in the population, this progressive indifference to sex that is even becoming a laudable attitude. In my opinion, all of this attests to an avoidance of relationships with others. Consequently, pornography and voyeurism constitute both symptoms and causes of the breakdown of the social system in favour of introversion, and the type of exhibition you're planning could contribute to this process."

"Come on, now! Between you and the *concerned citizen*, we're all going to get depressed!" exclaims the *liberal humanist*. "Take my advice: take a holiday, cheer up! The picture's not as bleak as you've painted it."

"All right, if you don't mind, I'd like to get a word in edgewise," says a new individual with a stern appearance.

The clothing of the *censor* is dark and neat, and he moves forward with precise, confident gestures.

"If we try to judge these objects or pornography in general by the effects they can have on individuals or on society, we'll never get anywhere," he continues, "because like the *deconstructionist* said, there will always be as many arguments for as against. Whether the exhibition should be mounted or not should not be determined by the effects of these images. What we do have to recognize is the simple fact that any society has to set limits on what can or cannot be said or shown. No society can exist without such limits, and today's societies are in the midst of a crisis in this respect. The individual liberty that we prize so much leads us to believe that everything can and must be said or shown, and we no longer know where to draw the line. What one person thinks should be prohibited, another thinks should be displayed. We are living in an era of radical relativism that makes it impossible to perform the essential task of founding a culture, a morality, an ethics, a social project, because this task requires choices, rejections and prohibitions. Since the only valid truth today is individual liberty, all these choices are seen as arbitrary. We are living in an age in which definitions and identities are in crisis. Don't think for a minute that I am advocating a return to the old morality or to religion. I simply want you to acknowledge that censorship is an inevitable element in the conception of any society, because, no matter how tolerant it might be, it has to protect itself against the excesses and disorders that threaten it, against that which negates it. At the origin of all societies lies the basic division between what is permissible and what is not. Censorship is a vital necessity."

"Of course," responds the *deconstructionist*, "but affirming the absolute necessity for censorship is simply stating the obvious:

you're saying that we can't exist in the infinite space of pure freedom, that we need a defined territory. However, that does not eliminate the radically arbitrary character of all the boundaries that censorship imposes. And if they are arbitrary, then it follows that they can be justifiably challenged by all those who disagree with them. In other words, because of its arbitrary nature, all censorship is violence."

The remarks of the *deconstructionist* fall like an axe amidst the gathering. In the silence that ensues, the *deconstructionist* continues:

"In the case at hand, how can we distinguish what is acceptable from what is not? How can we define what is 'pornographic' and thus prohibited? How, for example, do we distinguish between the pornographic objects and those that are merely erotic, and consequently considered more acceptable? You can see that any definition is uncertain and fragile, since it is arbitrary. Suppose we agree that pornography is the representation of obscene things that outrage our sense of modesty, that cause discomfort or shame. The new problem is then to determine what obscene things are, what is modesty, discomfort or shame. What makes something obscene rather than artistic, erotic, pathological or naive? There is no universal response to these questions for at least two reasons. First of all, because there is a problem of time: what was scandalous yesterday may well have no impact whatsoever today. We've seen several instances of this. Second, there is a problem of social context: what may be scandalous for certain individuals, groups, cultures and civilizations, may be perfectly innocuous for others. Pornography is only a label that certain individuals, groups or institutions stick on certain products according to variable criteria. It is not something that exists independent of people, that possesses a specific and identifiable content. It is not what is said or shown in itself that is pornographic, but what is judged to be so."

"Could we not say," the *contemporary anthropologist* suggests, "that it's their surrounding context that makes some images pornographic while others are not? A naked body in a medical book can't be pornographic, while it can be in a cultural review or magazine. The scientific and thus asexual signification added to the image by the medical book makes it non-pornographic. In the same way, the artistic quality we bestow on Michelangelo's *David*, because of the status of the work in the history of art, excludes it from the category of "pornography." In other words, what would be pornographic are all the images which offer us sex alone, with no possibility of added value; sex for sex's sake. That explains why, as the *provocateur* has pointed out, for years artists were only able to portray naked bodies in references to Biblical scenes or ancient mythology—contexts that added other meanings to sex, making it acceptable. That also explains why the *Venus* of a Tintoretto or a Velasquez, or Modigliani's nudes

with their pubic hair created such scandal in their time; although they hadn't entirely abolished the context that allowed us to see something other than a naked body, they had considerably reduced it.

"Yes, but your argument doesn't go far enough, my friend," responds the *deconstructionist*. "For if we say that it's the context that makes it possible for a given image to be non-sexual, non-erotic or non-pornographic, then we suppose that there are contexts that are universally recognized as being neither sexual nor erotic nor pornographic, with added meanings that in themselves exclude such dimensions. And once again, this brings us back to arbitrary choices made by individuals, groups, societies and cultures. To say, for example, that the naked Christ is not pornographic because the Christian context of the New Testament gives him an added religious quality, in no way explains why the religious quality cannot be compatible with sex, why religion would erase sex. This is a process which is not universal. Hindu religions do not recognize such an incompatibility. And even in our own culture there are people like Freud and the psychoanalysts who find Christ to be eminently erotic. But let's go further still: what's wrong with sex for sex's sake? You see, you can only answer by calling on arguments that have no universal foundation. And in practice, commercial pornography discovered long ago that sex for sex's sake could rapidly become boring, and so it added contexts, stories and situations to make it more attractive: fables, legends, historical dramas, sex in the workplace, etc. The very idea of defining pornography as the presentation of sex with no additives is untenable. Pornography cannot be defined as pure sex."

The Perils of Representation

For some time now, a buzz of conversation has been heard in another corner of the office. It is coming from the *spokespersons*, consulting one another on ways of leading the discussion out of the terrain that has bogged down the concerns of the *citizen* and the *sociologist*, the optimism of the *humanist*, the attempts at contextual definition of the *contemporary anthropologist* and the detached challenges of the *deconstructionist*. For the *spokespersons*, a group of men dressed in uniform which, although different, give them all the same rigid posture, the import of the exhibition and the problems it poses are determined by their vision of what a museum is and by the role they give themselves within such an institution. For them, no matter what the function of the objects chosen for the exhibition may have been in their original context—contemplation in solitude or among friends, sale for profit, amusement, discussion of women, decoration, etc.—on entering a museum they acquire an entirely new function: that of being conserved and displayed in order to represent something, be it art, an indi-

vidual, an era, a group, a culture, a nation, and so forth. They serve to identify—that is, to present identities. Their entry into the museum strips them of their original social and cultural function, giving them instead a newly acquired identifying function. Consequently, as members of the staff of a museum which they consider to be an institution whose aim is to represent, create images, construct identities, the *spokespersons* necessarily see themselves as the spokespersons for certain individuals or groups. Through their work, individuals, eras, groups and the like are represented in exhibitions, and they consider their task all the more charged with responsibility as they are aware that the images they present to the public can easily take on the appearance of truth, given the authority that such august institutions enjoy.

It comes as no surprise that the first to speak is the *spokesperson for the museum staff*:

"I can readily accept that in absolute terms, any definition of what is unacceptable is arbitrary and thus subject to endless debate. But we live in a given society and culture that possess specific criteria for judgment that cannot be ignored. And so my question is this: given what we know about our society and our culture, are these objects acceptable in a museum? Do we not run the risk of altering the image people have of this type of institution, and even discrediting both the museum and the professionals who work in it? Who among us did not feel a sense of surprise on first seeing these sexual, erotic or pornographic objects in the museum collections, a feeling of shaken references caused by the contrast between these objects and the nobility of the institution that possesses them?"

"Yes, of course," responds the *deconstructionist*, "this is the same kind of destabilizing effect caused by the elegant undergarments of a desirable woman because of the contrast between the sex they hide and the social and cultural refinement they imply. But all of that exists only because first, we associate sex with animality and scraps of silk with social and cultural refinement, and second, we oppose animality and refinement. Once again, these are associations and oppositions specific to a society, thus arbitrary. If we return to the issue of the museum and the objects in question, your surprise is the result of the ideas you associate with sex and the museum institution."

"It's because you have conceptions of the museum that are just as anti-democratic as the ideas of those who are constantly lauding the virtues of great art," adds the *left-wing intellectual*, glancing scornfully in the direction of the *elitist*.

"Bourgeois ideas," adds the *provocateur*.

Seeing the difficulties of the *museum spokesperson*, the *collectors' spokesperson* decides to come to his rescue:

"But by showing these objects, aren't we going to create a negative image of all those individuals—collectors, curators and others—who were interested in the objects to the extent of pur-

chasing them and placing them in the collection of a national museum? Aren't we going to make them look as though they were sexually obsessed and morally decrepit? Because it was their selections and their criteria, implicit for the most part, which determined that these objects were valid for the museum. What right have you got to give them such a reputation?"

"The public gives them that reputation," retorts the *deconstructionist*, "because they too stick the arbitrary label of 'obscene' on these objects. But in any event, it is very unlikely that all visitors will make such a judgment. What we call 'the public' is an abstract idea. What we really have is a collection of individuals and groups with varied opinions. With all your worries, you are only giving added weight to the views of one section of the public to the detriment of the others."

At this point another three individuals enter to provide their support. Despite the differences in the groups they represent, the *spokespersons for the people, the nation and the working class* all agree on what should be shown in the exhibition:

"The exhibition," they say, "should respond to this question: do these objects have common aesthetic or thematic qualities that could be considered as reflecting the identity of the people who produced them—an identity one would designate as being 'folk'? Is the way that women, eroticism and sexuality have been dealt with in these works characteristically 'folk'?"

"Do they express traits that are specific to the culture of the people?" asks the first.

"Of the nation?" suggests the second.

"Of the working class?" concludes the third.

"Moreover," they add, "the anonymity that marks many works of folk art is proof that the real author behind these works is an entity that is greater than the sum of its individuals."

"The soul or the culture of the people..."

"Of the nation..."

"Of the working class."

Stirred by these remarks, the *elitist* intervenes:

"I see here yet another reason for saying that the objects of folk art planned for the exhibition are not true works of art, for real works of art necessarily express universal values, emotions, experiences or themes. Your folk art has more of a vernacular character, a local or provincial scope."

"Absurd!" scoffs the *spokesperson*, "all art is localized in time and space. Even academic art varies... from one nation to another... one people to another... one social class to another. Folk art is neither more nor less local or provincial than official art," they conclude.

"In fact," adds the *working-class spokesperson*, "the supposed universality of official art only represents the pretensions of the bourgeoisie who want to make their own values universal ones."

Having said this, however, the *spokespersons* also express their

doubts. The *nation's spokesperson*, for example, wonders whether we can justify an exhibition on these objects, given the museum's mandate to represent the nation.

"Despite all our precautions," he wonders, "aren't we running the risk of creating a bad image of the people? All the more so since, unlike official art which is often considered elitist, folk art has always been seen as the art of ordinary people, as the manifestation of the national spirit, the collective, anonymous soul of a people, their existence, reality and essence—in short, all that which distinguishes the people of one nation from those of another, while at the same time expressing their homogeneity. Don't these objects cast aspersions on the morality of the people, their sexual propriety?"

"But what's so surprising about the fact that the people are vulgar and produce such objects?" asks the *elitist*.

"You can go on insulting the masses as much as you like," retorts the *left-wing intellectual*, "but just remember that one hundred years ago, the principal clientele for the pornography we consider vulgar today was the well-educated bourgeoisie."

"But in any case," adds the *provocateur*, "tell me why we always have to organize exhibitions that tell people how nice and attractive they are, that they're the best, the most intelligent? And there's nothing surprising about the fact that the lower class should be interested in sex. Do you think they're angels? Well, if that's the case, then angels are sexual beings! What's astonishing is that there are people who can't conceive of finding objects like these in a museum. In any case, what I still want to know is this: why should sexuality still be seen as something reprehensible?"

As for the *deconstructionist*, the doubts of the *spokespersons* arouse the same objections he's been making from the start:

"Not all of the individuals who make up your 'people' or your 'nation' will feel poorly represented by this exhibition. Not all will judge these objects negatively. Why should you favour the opinion of one part of the population? Besides, it's false to pretend that folk art is representative of the essence of a people or a nation, because for one thing, that people and that nation do not exist. All we have is a series of multiple realities that manifest diverse ideas and behaviours concerning women and sexuality. A temporal variability means that what was scandalous yesterday seems banal today. A spatial or social variability as well, depending on the social groups that make up your people, creates enormous variations in what is considered scandalous. Secondly, folk art itself is not a reality that is easily grasped. It represents a totality of products as diversified as one can possibly imagine. In fact, we should ask ourselves to what extent the definitions of art that are representative of a 'people' are not purely political. Do we want to reinforce the idea that the 'people' is a homogenous reality so as to reinforce the sense of na-

tion? If that's the case, then folk art will be unequivocally defined. Or do we want to distinguish the 'people' from the 'elite'? In that case, then folk art will be characterized by a series of qualifications marking it as a second-class art. Do we want to communicate the idea that the 'people' are threatened by change, by the arrival of new groups with different cultural habits, by industrialization, by interbreeding? Then the true art of the 'people' will be defined as that of a lost golden age that we imagine was pure, immobile and eternal. If, on the contrary, we want to get away from tradition and place value on change, then we'll define folk art by emphasizing current productions. In short, any conception of folk art that tries to make it represent the 'people', the 'nation' or a 'social class' is political."

The spokespersons, shaken by the *deconstructionist's* thesis, look at each other with disbelief. One of them decides to speak:

"If there is no single culture of the people, the nation or the class, do you mean to say that we the *spokespersons* are condemned to transmit constructs that are approximate or even fictitious?"

"Absolutely," replies the *deconstructionist*.

"Are you trying to say," the *spokespersons* continue, "that all we are really doing is circulating either our personal notions of people, nation and working class, or the equally personal notions of individuals or certain specific groups?"

"You've got it."

"But then that means that whether we want to or not, we the *spokespersons* are condemned to become involved in political struggles whose object is the representation of the self and the other, that our implication in identity struggles is inevitable."

"That's correct."

"But what right do we have to wield such an influence? What right have we to tell others what they are? What right have we got to use our authority to say: this is what the people are, what they think, what they do—especially when we're not talking about just anything here, but about women and sexuality?"

"You have no choice," the *deconstructionist* calmly replies, "that's what life is all about, everything is a question of power and power struggles; there is no such thing as absolute truth that some claim to receive through divine intervention. But there is a way of escaping all this: instead of giving yourself the task of representing a group, a people, a nation or social class, why don't you analyze and show the fictitious identities through which people define themselves and others, without proposing anything yourselves."

"But that would be tantamount to questioning the very reason for our existence," cry the *spokespersons*.

"Exactly," answers the *deconstructionist*.

Objects and Women

"I must be dreaming!"

This individual is also wearing a uniform, but of a less military cut.

"On one hand," continues the *feminist*, "you speak of the risk of offending the sensibilities of the public with this exhibition, while on the other hand, our predictable *deconstructionist* goes on with his usual nihilistic questions—and in the whole discussion, not once have the people most concerned by this undertaking been mentioned. Have you perhaps forgotten that these objects represent women? How are they going to feel when this exhibition displays to a vast public these grimacing faces, these images of women offered half-naked or entirely naked, standing or kneeling, presenting their buttocks and breasts with a smile? What are women going to feel when they see these infantile dolls being used by men for their pleasure, or women as prisoners of dogs that hunt them down, tear off their clothes and rape them? And how are they supposed to feel when they see Eisenhower's drawing of a woman making love with a dog and seeming to enjoy it? If the exhibition dealt with women and their traditional activities as depicted in folk art, the project could be justified by bringing out the documentary value of objects that allow us to see women in their everyday, material lives. Even though we would be dealing with stereotypes of housewives doing domestic chores and raising children, we could still show that the works present a certain degree of realism with respect to the condition of women and the relationship between the sexes. But with these erotic, sexual and pornographic images created almost exclusively by men, as has indeed been the case until very recently in academic art, then we have nothing here but a grab-bag of social stereotypes and male fantasies. We cannot justify the presentation of works that draw upon and reinforce a whole stock of questionable images."

Leaning over the pictures with an air of disgust, the *feminist* continues:

"Look at all these women happily revealing themselves, they all convey the same stereotypical feminine traits: sensitivity, natural grace, delicacy, compliance, tenderness or softness. Women presented this way always seem light and frivolous. These are women who cannot be taken seriously, women without defense, childlike, mere ornaments of the male world, objects for play or collection. As for the stereotypes that are more closely linked to sexuality, they are equally predictable and boring. What do we find? Look at this—women who are submissive, vanquished, raped, and despite everything, begging for more. And over here—women who are eminently available, requiring no effort on the man's part, women who are easily undressed, open, offered up, always delighted to serve male sexual instincts. Women who want to be taken by men, and who are nothing but an entertain-

ment for them. Other works lead us to believe that women are obsessed by sex. They show us women who are so highly sexed that they are unreal; women with uncontrollable sexual appetites, aflame with desire, insatiable, always turned on, in heat, bestial, constantly on the verge of orgasm; women who can be easily satisfied and who are rarely exhausted; active women who let themselves go altogether. No, this won't do! We cannot support an exhibition that would give voice to objects that express so much anger and violence against women. We cannot encourage this discourse of pornography, this unacceptable form of exploitation for exclusively masculine interests. We cannot condone such insults to women, such a degrading vision of sex, a uniquely male model of sexuality that totally excludes female sexuality. Why not seek out representations of women in folk art that show a greater understanding of the other sex, as did Goya, Rembrandt, Manet or Toulouse-Lautrec in academic art? Why not present representations of women that show them to be true human beings equal to men, that we respect with all their qualities and flaws, joys and fears, desires and fatigue?"

"You seem to believe these objects have an unequivocal message," interrupts the *deconstructionist*. "That is not the case at all. Like any other objects, these can be seen in different ways and the interpretations that are given tell us more about the authors of these interpretations than about the objects themselves. But there is a still more serious problem with your argument: you assume that everything shown by these objects represents a false idea of female sexuality. Well, I ask you: how can we define authentic female sexuality? Perhaps psychological research has provided us with few definite conclusions, but one continues to hold, namely: that unlike men, whose reactions to erotic stimuli are relatively homogenous, women display much stronger variations from one subject to another, variations that prevent us from being able to speak of a common experience. While men are all more or less equally receptive to pornography, women's attitudes span a much broader range, with at one extreme women who are far more sensitive to it than even the most excitable males, and at the other extreme, women who remain totally insensitive to its effects. And finally, all the statistics show that women are consuming more and more pornography. So how can you speak of pornography as being an exclusively male product, when it is also appreciated by women who make up a growing proportion of the market?"

"Yes, okay," responds the *feminist*, "but that can be explained by the alienation of a growing number of women under the assaults of pornography."

"Oh, really? Who authorized you to diagnose alienation in women? Where did you acquire this superior knowledge and awareness that allows you to tell someone else that they are alienated, that they've taken the wrong turn, that they are cut-

ting themselves off from their true nature? Besides, women and feminists themselves do not all agree on this point. You must be aware of the story of the sex-trade workers who have voiced their disagreement with the feminist stereotype that says they are poor victims of a difficult social environment, forced to do this work for economic reasons. How do you respond to them when they tell you your discourse is insulting? What are you going to say when some of them tell you that they enjoy their work, the salaries are good and the work is less tedious than a factory job? Besides, there's the conflict among feminists themselves, who wonder whether it wouldn't be a better idea to fight against real rather than imaginary violence, feminists who ask what right certain women have to speak on behalf of others, to define 'women,' and their true sexuality, to exclude women who use pornography, to define what should be allowed, which female sexuality is politically correct? How do you answer the question: which is the best, the truest sexuality? What are we to make of female sado-masochists, for example? Or what about those women whose ideal is to attain a sexuality that is as simple, explicit and direct as that which our culture assigns to men? What about those women who go to 'ladies' nights' strip clubs, or those who like to exhibit themselves, what about those for whom pornography represents a liberation from the old sexual models, a chance to speak freely about sex, to no longer be ashamed of their bodies, to live their sexuality to its fullest and to be active, even dominating? What about those women who not only consume pornography, but produce it? What are we supposed to make of all these dimensions of female sexuality—how do you propose to reduce them to a single category? Isn't considering that the sexual norm necessarily includes love, romance, sweetness and light one of the foundations of the bourgeois oppression of the 19th century? Unless, of course, to respond to all these questions you decide to condemn every sexual act as being repugnant and threatening..."

The Educational Virtues of the Striptease

The *deconstructionist's* tone has become ironic. A heavy silence has taken over the office, and the *curator*, haggard and on the verge of tears, feels lost. Then, while everyone is still trying to digest the last spate of questions, a new character enters the scene. Despite his reserved demeanour, as though constantly trying to blend into the wallpaper, the *public servant* takes the floor:

"But what does the public want? Isn't that the question we should be asking? After all, I'm supposed to serve the public, that's what they pay me for, isn't it?"

The *public servant* cannot go any farther, because his question has already created a rare unanimity among the other characters, who find the tyranny of the public intolerable.

"Why should we submit to the public," they protest in one voice. "Don't we have things of our own to say? Isn't it our role to give the public the fruits of our knowledge?"

"Anyway," retorts the *deconstructionist*, "what the public wants is everything and anything, because there is no single public, but a multitude of them."

Taking advantage of the uproar the *public servant* has provoked, a new *spokesperson* ventures to speak despite his painful shyness:

"We've spoken about almost everybody," says the *men's spokesperson* uncertainly. "We've spoken, with some justification, of the women who are represented in these works. But throughout the debate, we haven't said anything about the authors of these objects—the men themselves. After all, the paradox of all this is that in an exhibition on women in folk art, the principal subject is men, their imaginations and mentalities in regard to women. These objects are the work of men, not women. Thus the objects speak about men. Look at them. Don't they all express the pattern of female representation that is intrinsically masculine, and which we find in academic art as well? Just look. All of these works reiterate the theme of men's fear in the face of the considerable powers they attribute to women; fear of the power women have thanks to their intimate association with the secrets and occult forces of nature, their animality and their ability to give birth. Isn't it precisely this animal nature that is expressed by Eisenhower's women who make love to animals? Fear, too, of women's more practical power due to their ability to seduce men and to refuse their advances, to reject and humiliate them; their power stemming from the fact that in matters of love and sexuality, they are both the desired object of men and the judges of the value of those very same men: of their amorous and sexual value, their virility. Faced with the power that transforms women into sources of unassuaged desire, wounds, frustrations and impotence, it is not surprising that the male imagination has sought to reassure men and allay their fears. Countless works of art attest to this need. Take all those works that make a woman out to be an unsatisfied, eminently available nymphomaniac, don't they present a sexuality that is male, and thus understandable for men? Don't such women, who require no effort on the man's part, who refuse him nothing, who are there, at his service, to give him unlimited pleasure and confirm his virility, don't they represent a fantasy-like way for men to cancel out the power that women have in reality, whose harmful effects they experience every day? In the same way, consider all these representations of women that show men's hatred, aggression, violence and anger against women, all of those grimacing women by Cockayne, the hunted women or the scenes of copulation with men or beasts that suggest constraint, rape, humiliation or punishment. Aren't these also ways for men to affront—this time

with vengeance and domination—the power of women they are so afraid of? Even all those images of women that were not selected for the exhibition, since they do not refer directly to sexuality—those images of virgins, saints or virtuous, comforting, protective mothers that we find endless examples of in both folk art and academic art—are they not also a means of defusing the threat that women represent for men? For what does this celebration of idealized, unattainable and untouchable women represent if not an attempt to render female sexuality powerless?"

"Yes, we can give the work that kind of interpretation," says the *deconstructionist* with his usual sardonic air, "but we can also suggest others. Like all the *spokespersons*, you persist in trying to categorize a reality that is far too complex to be reduced to a single meaning. To reduce male imaginings of women to a question of fear of their power might apply to some men, but certainly not to all. As the *feminist* showed us, there are also those who are not afraid of women, who love and understand them, who consider them as equals. Then, too, there are men who are completely indifferent to them. The image of men that you construct is incredibly reductionist and simplistic."

Once again, the *deconstructionist's* remarks have irritated most of the others and only reinforced the growing hostility they have felt for him throughout the debate. A volley of exasperated protest ensues. Sick and tired of being constantly contradicted by the *deconstructionist*, the others start to become aggressive:

"You keep coming back with the same objections!" cries one.

"In fact, you're terrified of committing yourself, that's why you limit yourself to tearing down what others try to build!" exclaims another.

"Exactly! Tell us what you really think. Go on! We're listening, let's hear your opinion—it should be good for a laugh," says a third.

"If we listen to you we won't be able to say anything, affirm anything or communicate anything," adds still another.

"And isn't it precisely the desire to order what we see and hear with interpretation and meaning that makes us human?" continues another.

"Yes, of course," replies the *deconstructionist*, who still hasn't lost his smile, "and that's just what I find so interesting and amusing: this desperate activity of human beings to try to create some semblance of order in the world with the help of ephemeral fictions."

"How pretentious you are!"

"Who do you think you are to put yourself above us like that!"

"You're nothing but a coward!"

"Let's shut him up once and for all!"

The others would have rapidly come to blows with the *deconstructionist*, if the *avator* had not, for the first time in the discussion, intervened to save the situation.

"Okay! All right!" he cries, pale and trembling. "Yes, okay, we can no longer say anything, and anything we say is pure invention, fiction, fantasy. Fine, you're right, Mr. *Deconstructionist*, I hope you're satisfied now."

He's in such a fevered state that he seems on the verge of collapse. Then, clutching at straws, he continues:

"But what am I supposed to do? I have an exhibition to put together!" he cries in desperation. "I have to say something! There are people waiting! I can't back out now!"

Holding his head in his hands, ready to burst into tears, he murmurs:

"I'm lost, they'll take my project away, maybe they'll fire me... Isn't there anyone who understands me?"

As the words leave his lips, he raises his head, his eyes wide open as though struck by an un hoped-for, saving illumination.

"Yes, that's it!" he exclaims, in a voice filled with hope, surprising the cast of characters, who look at him incredulously. "What if the exhibition just talks about me? What do you think? There's justification for you! Using the pretext of showing objects of folk art, the exhibition could present me to the public—the curator, one example drawn from the community of curators of all the world's museums. It could show how, in the process of preparing an exhibition of these works, I'm torn between the desire to classify and label them and the desire to appreciate them for their aesthetic qualities. It could show how I, the curator, am influenced by my elitist aspirations and my left-wing political convictions. It could exhibit the unresolved anthropological questions that obsess me and my suffering due to the material constraints that limit my research. And in taking me as an example, the exhibition could also show how a curator is also a human being motivated equally by desires of provocation and by the desire to stop talking about sex, or simply the desire for visual pleasure and no more. It could show how the curator is at once a citizen and a concerned sociologist, an optimistic humanist and the censor of his own ideas. And wouldn't it be interesting for the public to learn just how difficult it is for a curator to accomplish the task of representing the institution he works for, or to represent a group, a people, a nation—or women—with such a project? In short, the exhibition could thus seek to interest the public in all the questions that concern me, in all my interests, in everything that surprises or astonishes me, and in particular in my desire to be surprised by these questions, my need to be disconcerted by the discoveries, desires and needs that are characteristic of my work." The *curator* stops to gauge the reaction of the individuals who fill his office. They all seem a bit sadder, a bit greyer. An uncertain smile flickers across his face.

"And why limit myself to the curator?" he continues. "Why not speak of the man I am as well? Why not make the exhibition a sort of full-length striptease, a presentation of my complex re-

lations with women, my triumphs and sorrows, the fears, incertitude and frustrations women awaken in me as well as the love and affection they inspire in me? Why not speak of the paradox that I am in respect to any other human being, that "man without qualities" with the multiple identities I have worn over the years, from childhood until today, which make me a real and complex entity, like any other person, the product of my society? I could take the pretext of catalyzing themes like women and sexuality in folk art to talk about myself—because it is becoming increasingly dangerous to speak of anything else—to speak of myself the way I would like to do with the woman I love, in order to seduce her and keep her by my side a little longer... to be sure that she has truly understood me, to be understood, quite simply..."

"Yes, that is doubtless the most honest approach," says the *deconstructionist* in a faltering voice.

The *curator*, surprised by this unexpected support, turns toward him. But the *deconstructionist* looks very pale—even translucent. The *curator* in turn looks at the others, and they all seem to be gradually fading away, immobile, looking at him with empty expressions, as though they were returning to another world, a world in which they have always belonged. Their transparency has increased to the point where he can scarcely see them now, as though they were made of mist. And then, nothing at all. The office is once again empty. The silence is complete. The *curator* remains motionless for a moment, incredulous. Then, quickly looking around him, he notices with surprise the computer whose existence he had completely forgotten. He moves his chair closer: "Women and sexuality in folk art," he reads on the screen. He leans over the keyboard and adds: "The curator's dilemma." He smiles. He feels fine.

Ceramics as Kitsch

Richard Millet

THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW thoughts on kitsch by a person who works in ceramics, an art that lies outside the prevailing discourse on the fine arts and is considered at best a minor art, at worst a decorative art. It is a discipline that is rarely taught at the university level in Canada, and virtually ignored by art curators, historians and critics. This deliberate oversight on the part of the arts establishment indicates that it views with disfavour, perhaps even with scorn, a discipline with which it is unfamiliar, since ceramics is not deemed sufficiently noble, illustrious or cultivated. The consensus would seem to be that ceramics is not an art because it is created from humble materials, and because its function is most often linked to daily use, thereby excluding it from the realm of the sublime and the exceptional. Consequently, not being an art, ceramics can be associated with what is called kitsch.

Kitsch is the exact opposite of good taste, fine art, excellence and authentic art—which it imitates. It is seen as an impostor that must be identified so that it can be avoided, even ostracized. The art that is dominant and for all practical purposes institutionalized in the academies, by virtue of which it is both judge and jury, is careful to protect its purity using all the means at its disposal. What I find interesting is the idea of hoax, of trickery that is associated with kitsch. Here, when I talk about kitsch, I am not referring to the trinkets and miniature reproductions of famous works of art that are sold in museums and tourist shops—they are merely merchandise. Nor am I talking about the folk art relegated to the sphere of anthropologists by the fine arts world. (The primitive painter Rousseau is undoubtedly represented in art museums because his works were collected by Picasso and other avant-garde artists of his time, and because his works are paintings).

My hypothesis is that kitsch, like art itself, is an end result. It is a work's meaning, its import, that makes it either art or kitsch, a pretence at art. Under which heading will artistic productions be classified? Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is art, as are Michelangelo's sculpted tombs. But while the classification of works from the past is virtually complete, the situation is far different for contemporary productions. It can easily be shown that those who determine which artifacts are works of art and which are not (or are false art), are more often than not mistaken. This is where we see the need for a critical evaluation process that is historical, rather than instantaneous. Major art museums are full of works today that were rejected by the specialists of the period in which they were created. One has only to think of the Impressionists, the Fauve artists, Van Gogh, Picasso or Marcel Duchamp, among others. The rehabilitation of their work is not the result of their authors' reworking or altering it in order to change its status. A work remains what it is; what changes is our perception of it. The change in the attitude of the arts establish-

ment is due to the greater maturity gained with the passage of time.

So what happens now when a work is created outside the boundaries of the fine arts, with common materials such as plastic, or with motifs found in popular culture? When Picasso abandoned paint and bronze to work in ceramics, was this art, decorative art or kitsch? Twenty years after his death, his ceramics are still not shown in museums, historians make no mention of them, and they do not appear in art history books.

Is the status of art or kitsch determined by the materials and traditional classification of works, rather than by their intrinsic aesthetic and conceptual qualities? Can the ridiculous become sublime, and the sublime ridiculous? Perhaps museums contain more kitsch than they realize...

The author is a ceramist.

Folk Art

and Marius Barbeau, the Populist

Paul Carpentier

MARIUS BARBEAU WAS GIFTED with that quality that classical philosophy considers the basis of the scientific mind: the capacity for wonder. Combined with an insatiable curiosity, his unflagging sense of wonder led him to explore a vast array of subjects dealing with cultural behaviour in Canada.

His first interests led him to native people, from the Indians of the Pacific Coast, to Ancienne-Lorette on the outskirts of Quebec City.

In 1914, a chance discussion with Franz Boas turned his attention to his fellow countrymen in French Canada, and during the years that followed, he devoted himself to collecting their stories and songs.

He soon drew a number of contemporary artists into his circle. He appreciated their work, and used his influence with museum directors and patrons of the arts to promote it. He liked to say that he acquired his taste for beauty in childhood, principally thanks to his mother, an "educated" woman he admired and loved greatly.

In the summer of 1925, he invited two friends, artists Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson, to join him on Île d'Orléans. He wanted to offer them new subjects for their painting, and he wanted their opinion on the artistic quality of the island's churches and their contents.

From there, the three of them set out to visit the studio of Louis Jobin. They were immediately captivated by the sculptor, whom they considered a direct link between the twentieth century and the Renaissance. They went on to Île aux Coudres, where they were charmed by the countrywomen's quilts and rugs. The two painters decided to finish off the summer in Charlevoix, and Barbeau returned to Île d'Orléans on his own, inviting Ramsay Traquair to join him there in August to study the churches over the next three months.

This contact with the material culture had the same effect on him as had native culture and oral folklore. Like a child at the fair, he wanted to see and hear everything, and he described his discoveries with boundless enthusiasm.

But it wasn't enough for him to learn and discover for himself; he wanted to share his knowledge with others, and he made use of every possible means to do so. A prolific author, he wrote books and articles at an unbelievable pace. His books were principally intended for specialists, but he published articles in the popular press as well as in scholarly reviews. Nor were his efforts limited to the printed word, for he also prepared exhibitions and organized performances.

From 1919 on, in association with the Montreal Historical Association, he organized a series of *Veillées du bon vieux temps* at the Saint-Sulpice library. In 1927 and 1928, he organized the Canadian Folk Song and Folk Art Festivals at Château Frontenac in association with J.M. Gibbon of Canadian Pacific. In these instances, he

once again proved his avant-gardism in offering a "total experience" to spectators. There was everything: songs, stories, dance, crafts; even the menu was made up of the traditional recipes of the islanders he had known on Île d'Orléans.

When he went to Saint-Jean-Port-Joli in 1929, he had already amassed a great deal of information, both first-hand in the field and from secondary sources through his readings, that enabled him to cast an educated eye on the work of the artists and craftsmen he continued to discover.

As was his habit, Barbeau travelled by bicycle, which allowed him to observe everything around him. He noticed lions that were carved on the gables of a house, and that was enough to make him stop and visit. At a glance, he took in the reliefs Bourgault had sculpted on his furniture. His first concern was to hear the man recount his experience as a sculptor, and to record everything in his notebook. The tale he was told was enough for him to distinguish Médard Bourgault from sculptors like Jobin and place him among the folk artists. He left the house with his first purchases. This was the beginning of a collaboration that would last several years, during which the foundations of a school that is now internationally recognized were established.

Barbeau returned to Ottawa with his arms and his imagination filled with the carvings of Saint-Jean-Port-Joli. He began a regular correspondence with Médard Bourgault, encouraging him to produce and informing him of the interest of collector friends who wanted to buy his works, one of the first being Dr. Gabriel Nadeau. Bourgault responded to the call and began to sculpt on commission, and Barbeau wrote articles publicizing his work. He used a familiar strategy, offering an experience to potential clients through a direct contact with the artist: he introduced Bourgault into the circle of public exhibitions, asking him to bring his works and to work in front of visitors. He "presented" him in this way in Quebec City, La Malbaie, Toronto, Ottawa, New York, Montreal, Montpellier, Saint-Jean and Jonquière.

In his study on *L'œuvre de Médard Bourgault*, Angéline Saint-Pierre tells us: "...rural art took up almost all of his time from 1929 to 1935." This is not surprising, since what Barbeau promoted were sculptures whose themes centred on the land as stereotyped by Henri Julien and Edmond-Joseph Massicotte, and which would become the trademark of the Saint-Jean-Port-Joli school for decades to follow.

Barbeau's interest in Bourgault was characteristic of the particular nationalism of the time, which was very much a part of Barbeau's spirit.

A disciple of Henri Bourassa's pan-Canadian nationalism, he was immensely proud of his French heritage and devoted a great deal of energy to promoting the traditions inherited from pre-revolutionary France, which had taken on the colour and flavour of the Canadian territory.

It was in this line of thought that he so passionately collected, sorted, classified and disseminated the oral folklore of French Canada. And this same ideology influenced his choices and his descriptive approach to folk art. For him, there were two categories of art that were typically French-Canadian: the heirs of the French Renaissance, who founded the school in Cap Tourmente that perpetuated the canons of an archaic art, and which died out with the death of Louis Jobin in 1928—these were the likes of Leblond, Emond, Leprovost, Baillargé and Berlinguet—and the artists of the land, those who never set foot in an art school, who translated their everyday world in what they did—those he called artisans, the same title he conferred upon Jobin.

Barbeau began to collect in Quebec in 1925, during his stay on Île d'Orléans, and he collected intensively over the next fifteen years. He distributed his harvest among private collectors, some American museums, the museums and historical societies of Quebec and Ontario, the National Gallery and the National Museum of Canada.

Even though we can cite such factors as their ready availability and low cost, Barbeau's personal predilection explains in large part the emphasis on folk art in his collections. For him, the buttoned blankets, braided and hooked rugs, Assomption sashes, furniture, tools and sculpture were tangible evidence of the vigour of the French-Canadian culture. Unlike his successors, he wrote copiously on the subjects of his collecting, and one has only to examine this literature (material culture made up about 24% of the body of his written work) to discover his feelings about this material. There where the strictures of publishing might have masked his innermost thoughts, his abundant notes and an as-yet unpublished autobiography reveal them to us in all their spontaneity and candour.

In folk art as in several other areas, Marius Barbeau was a trail-blazer not only in the creation of museum collections, but in laying down the foundations for literature on the subject. Two events were of great significance in this aspect of his career. The first was his long sojourn on Île d'Orléans and Île aux Coudres in the summer and fall of 1925, during which time he came into contact with most of the forms of folk art that would continue to fascinate him until his death. The second was the privilege of knowing artisans like Louis Jobin and Médard Bourgault, and being present at the death of the former and the artistic birth of the latter. In both cases, he reacted with a combination of his habitual intellectual curiosity and an enormous sensitivity for these individuals and their work. His emotivity allowed him to embrace this phenomenon passionately, without speculating as to its intrinsic value, and to "sell" it to all those who were willing to listen. His intellectual curiosity led him to develop his interest on solid foundations and pave the way for a new field of study in cultural anthropology in Canada. In addition, his activities were the germ of creation for folk art collections in several museums of North America.

The Collections

QUEBEC HAS INHERITED SEVERAL FOLK art traditions that are proudly exhibited by museums. Charlevoix's radiant paintings are an obvious example, but equally impressive is the array of traditional instruments that the Robert-Lionel Séguin collection conserves in homage to toolmanship. In Quebec City, the Musée de la civilisation boasts the prestigious collection of Coverdale, the magnate of sea transport, and there are countless pieces scattered throughout the regional museums. There is no unilateral definition, then, of folk creation, but rather myriad facets that are linked to the circumstances of production and collection.

The collection that concerns us here, that of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, covers the field of folk creation from the beginning of the century to present day. In accordance with its national mandate, the museum must cover the entire country, and in June 1994, its holdings in history, folklore and native ethnology counted exactly 167,423 artifacts. In order to describe the collection of Quebec folk art in particular, it was out of the question to once again venture into a maze of subtle definitions.¹ In fact, the principal merit of these definitions is to serve as a point of reference for a market destabilized by the proliferation of creators. A new label would not serve any useful purpose apart from continuing to "constrict the universe," without necessarily helping us understand what is taking place before our wondering eyes...

We thus chose to approach the problem from the opposite angle, avoiding questions on "the nature of folk art" and beginning instead with tangible data, the objects themselves – and more specifically, those collected in the history and folklore holdings of the Museum, making up what are called the folk art collections. Direct observation, however, once again raised the problem of definition – there's no escaping it. How can the expression "folk art" be applied to such disparate realities? What possible common points could there be between a cup sculpted with consummate skill by an anonymous artist at the end of the last century, and collected by Barbeau from Madame Hagar Baillargé Williams of Sainte-Ursule Street in Quebec City, and

"Folk art rhetoric rests upon an interwoven web of assumptions [...] all of which might be termed myths: 1) the myth of individuality, 2) the myth of the poor but happy artisan, 3) the myth of handicraft, 4) the myth of a conflict-free past, and 5) the myth of national uniqueness. [...] Like most myths, they persist because they are socially useful and provide explanations that people find comfortable and reassuring."

L. Kenneth Ames, Beyond necessity · Art in the Folk Tradition. Winterthur, Winterthur Museum, 1977, p. 21-82.

the rocks painted by Arthème Saint-Germain on a Thurso country road, and bequeathed by Pierre Thérberge to the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1973? They would seem to come from two separate worlds with no point of contact; yet classical typology persists in grouping them under the same grab-bag heading of folk art. This seems all the more surprising in that the disparity of these objects is equalled only by the disparity of those who collected them, if we consider the objectives, methods and ideologies at work behind each collection.

This is where we discovered an element that would guide us in our work: the information revealed by the context of the object's acquisition. Between the acquisition in the original environment and the exhibition in the museum lies an entity that until now was only perceptible to those initiates who had access to the coded files of archives, but which is essential to an understanding of the link between these piecemeal elements: the collection itself, and what motivated the collector as he went about recreating the world in his collection.

Our goal was to clarify the mystery surrounding the collections by identifying the motives of those who accumulated them and those who presented them, in order to better grasp what was hidden beneath the pretended ingenuousness of the official discourse and approach "the true nature of folk art."

The new element in the presentation of collectors' treasures lies in the fascinating comparison that enables us to distinguish, with proof to back us up, each of the visions that are embodied. This is the voyage into the "Paradis du monde" that the public is invited to embark upon: that country hidden deep within us all that artists explore day after day, and that collectors in turn have rebuilt in the image of the land of their dreams. None of these visions match, none of these lands exist: what remains is the persistence of the dream which floats over all, intact.

Collections, conserved, studied and occasionally exhibited, are a museum's raw materials. For a long time, the institution's responsibility for the contents of its holdings served as a protection

against potential conflicts of interest, as though by the nobility of its functions the museum could rise above the fray. But to the credit of the current reflection on museology, collections are now being put on the hot seat. The power relationships that ruled over acquisitions are now being challenged publicly, and increasingly, interpretive decisions must contend with organized lobbies. Even the type of museographical classification under one heading or another is no longer innocuous and bears considerable consequences, including the type of presentation: folk art or art? The dilemma is well known. In fact, the method of labelling is not free of suspicion either, since it can reflect the values subconsciously transmitted by the institution. Thus it was that until very recently, a subtle distinction was made at the Canadian Museum of Civilization: for exhibition labels, the name of the object preceded the name of its creator for folk art, while for contemporary Native art—as for art in general—pride of place was always given to the name of the artist.² The insidious heritage of an era when we believed in the spontaneous generation of folk art, this anonymity was perpetuated by the negligence of certain documentalists who showed little interest in identifying the production of these humble artists.

Our observation of folk art begins, then, with the crucial phase of collection, through which these objects have acquired the status that sets them apart. Behind the praiseworthy objectives of preservation, we must understand the real criteria of selection, since as American anthropologist James Clifford has written, "Collections contain what 'deserves' to be kept, [...] what seems 'traditional.' [...] Every appropriation of culture implies a specific temporal position and form of historical narration."³

To trace the background of collection we must—to borrow the well-known metaphor that contemporary museology theorists have adopted for exhibitions—seek out the implicit "discourse" underlying each collection. Over and above the hazy theorizing, the analogy does prove useful, for isn't it true that in a text "each word is imbued with the profession, the genre, the current, the party [...] each word is laden with the context and the contexts

All the ways to put down the folk artist

- 1) They're isolated.
- 2) They're just hobbyists.
- 3) Even they don't think they're artists.
- 4) Their works are happy accidents.
- 5) Their works don't show any development.
- 6) It's not fine art; it's not linked to any intellectual body of thought; respected intellectuals don't take it into account.

Peter Denny, "All the ways to put down the folk artist," *The Review of the Association for Documentation of Neglected Aspects of Culture in Canada*. London, Curme et Thérberge, 1974.

A few questions for folk art:

While it is difficult to define the limits of the art, it is even more dangerous to describe it as "folk." Should the word be understood in the sense of social class, economic level, cultural group? [...] The instruments of logic and language are not able to provide us with a clear idea of what is covered by this concept. Why? Because folk art is a construct of history.

Jean Simard, "Définition de l'art populaire ou analyse de la construction d'un concept," *Questions d'art populaire*. Québec, Université Laval, Cahiers du CELAT No. 2, 1984, p. 3-19.

in which it has lived its intense social life?" Applied to collection, this sociological dimension suddenly expands our perspectives. Working through the exhibition like an open book, we can—if we are attentive—read into it a host of information on the ideology of the moment, the influence of the art market, cultural stereotypes, and so on. Along with the respective qualities of each of the components that constitute it, the collection takes on an independent personality linked to the objective conditions of its production and enriched by the relational system of the objects among themselves. At the same time, the objects themselves inherit from this juxtaposition, since they have a second history, that of their acquisition, superimposed on that of their origin. The identity of each collection will be profoundly imprinted with all of this important genetic baggage.

Yet when we reach the phase of interpretation, this heritage often disappears. The collection as a historical phenomenon fixed in time, with an aesthetic purpose and specific cultural values, is simply taken over by the official discourse, which appropriates it by erasing its particularities. This has been the unfortunate fate of collections of folk art—among others—when they have been sanctified as national collections. This rapid beatification has prevented us until now from seeing them as proposals with a certain degree of arbitrariness, and thus open to question.

In an area like history, the rule of unchanging interpretation has persisted and the process of knowledge constantly calls for a critical re-evaluation. The same phenomenon exists in the cultural world with the constant quest for artistic renewal, but it seems that the zone of national heritage has remained more or less free of dispute. The consensus on the collective property of heritage should not allow us to forget the arbitrariness of the value systems at play. The increasingly rapid changes affecting today's populations affect the world of references as well. In a recent conference, Hugues de Varine, the museologist associated with the ecomuseum of Le Creusot in France, went so far as to claim that each new generation has the right to challenge the heritage passed down from the previous one.⁵ Without seeking to cast aspersions on our predecessors, we will try to update the ideologies that have coloured the history of our material culture, and folk art in particular. We cannot pretend to attain the zero degree of subjectivity, knowing that despite all the usual precautions, perspective is always affected by the intellectual trends of the times. But we believe it is time to look at the collections from a new angle, to understand the dynamics between the representations we are given and their impact on our collective identity.

Let's turn to the folk art collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Faced with the enormous holdings, we had to feel our way alone. Using some significant objects from the *patenteux* collection as a starting point, we were able to broaden the circle and gradually include lesser-known pieces. In general, proposals

are based on intuition. To guide us, we had Jean Simard's hypothesis on folk art as a construction of history. Our challenge was to dismantle the collections for a closer examination of the way they were assembled and created. It is certain that another researcher with other preconceptions would have associated other objects in another way to express another logic—undoubtedly just as cohesive—concerning this multiform reality. Three major collections stood out, corresponding to three distinct periods: the Marius Barbeau collection, the collection of English collectors represented by Nettie Sharpe, and the collection of works by the *patenteux*. We have tried to trace their successive histories—once again in a subjective fashion—while awaiting the verdict of the next generation of critics, younger and more daring, who will come along and shatter our idols.

The Marius Barbeau Collection

IN SETTING OUT TO ANALYSE the collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, we ran headfirst against a monument—the “national treasures” of the Marius Barbeau collection, collected at a time when the institution still came under the Department of Mines during the 1920s and 1930s. The stature of the great researcher in the Quebec cultural landscape is such that a mere mortal hesitates to confront it: he who described himself as the “pioneer” of folklore studies in French Canada seems to be the stuff of legend. The amount of work carried out by the man still astounds us today. He was rumoured to have been the author of some fifty books and six hundred articles¹. With time, the bibliography established by Mario Béland² has reduced this to more plausible proportions by removing repetitions and redundancies, but the fact remains that his production was prodigious.

Ethnographer Marius Barbeau was at the confluence of the two dominant cultures in North America, and he remained in constant relations with both. Born in Sainte-Marie to parents from the Beauce, he spent his childhood in Idaho, where his father hoped to make his fortune in gold. Barbeau studied at Oxford, and in his early career he came into contact with American anthropologists Franz Boas and Edouard Sapir. His first research was carried out among the Wyandot Hurons, and it was on Boas's urging that he turned to his own culture.

Among Barbeau's countless activities, the one we are particularly interested in here was his practice as a collector, knowing full well that it is difficult to try and break a man of such prolific talents down into specific roles. The museum is fortunate in that its archives hold the researcher's notebooks³, filled with invaluable scribbles: all of the notes, lists and addresses compiled by Barbeau in his excursions into the field every summer.⁴

Biographical Notes on Marius Barbeau

- Born in Sainte-Marie de Beauce in 1883
- Law degree from Laval University in 1907
- Studies in anthropology at Oxford as first French-Canadian Rhodes scholar, studies at the Sorbonne
- Geological Survey in Ottawa in 1911
- Meets Franz Boas in Washington at a meeting of the Anthropological Association in 1914
- Presidency of the American Folklore Society in 1918
- Organization, in collaboration, of:
 - *Les Veillées du Bon Vieux Temps* in 1919 to 1922
 - *The Canadian Folk-Song and Handicraft Festival* at the Château Frontenac in 1927, 1928 and 1930

The Field Notebooks

In reading the notebooks, we can discern a regular pattern in his approach. On arriving in people's homes, Barbeau would begin by drawing up an inventory of everything that attracted his attention while waiting to learn the intentions of his hosts. Was his regard panoramic or selective? It is hard to tell, since the notebooks only give us glimpses of the events filtered through the eye of the researcher. What is clear is that the lists are very detailed, revealing the sinuous path from barn to attic to rock pile. Barbeau snooped everywhere, even down to "the darkened room of the past where the 93-year-old grandmother lay." He questioned and recorded all of the available information, helping his memory with little sketches. The specialized techniques were meticulously taken note of, whether in the field of textiles which particularly interested him, with recipes for vegetal dyes, the manufacture of straw hats, techniques for hooked rugs, Assomption sashes, various designs for buttoned blankets—or *pareseuse boutonnee*, as they were so prettily called in Charlevoix county⁵—or plants and herbs, housebuilding, bread ovens, brick ovens, and so on. Men and women were drawn into this enormous undertaking of preserving the traditional culture: Barbeau listened to the tales of midwives, interviewed the new generation of weavers, took note of the prizes awarded to artisans by the *Women's Art Association*, transcribed the earnings of eel fishers and the financial forecasts of maple syrup producers, recorded the comings and goings of itinerant potters ... In the margin of the lists of inventories drawn up with a view to future purchases, we can read brief notes made on the spot that help reconstruct the atmosphere of his negotiations. Here are some, chosen at random: "Curious [...] interesting [...] very very interesting [...] the first I've ever seen [...] colours not chosen very well [...] I'd like to have it [...] every day I say that I want to buy it [...] offered \$5 (accepted) [...] He made a large table with a lathe-turned base, price to be determined when the husband's here [...] beautiful old rocking chair, \$10, already bargained, as old as the road itself (bought)." The collector was on the hunt, and he recorded potential competitors in advance: "Jews came to Île aux Coudres last winter. They bought a lot of things."

The Marius Barbeau archives at the Canadian Museum of Civilization include 6,000 songs recorded on wax cylinders and more than 13,000 texts collected between 1916 and 1948 by Barbeau and his associates: E.Z. Massicotte, Adélard Lambert, Pere Archange Godbout, Jules Tremblay, Lorraine Wyman, Gustave Landtôt, Frère Daniel Boudreault, Luc Lacourcière and many others.

To protect his notes from prying eyes, the comments are sometimes scrawled in English—we read "price too high" on the occasion of a disappointing visit to a house in Sainte-Famille. In his habitual point-form style, Barbeau would take stock of the situation, noting the frame of mind of his contacts and potential sellers: "Doesn't want to sell, at least not today [...] will sell later when the mother has died [...] we still use it but will sell for \$25." Their reticence is also scrupulously recorded: "It's in good shape and can still be used, it might come in handy [...] I'll need it [...] we never wanted to sell it [...] he was offered \$400 for his grandfather Amable's carved door, with a replacement thrown in. But he replied that so long as he had food to put on the table, he wouldn't sell."

The salvage operation undertaken by Marius Barbeau and his associates entailed mass purchases to rapidly build up the national collection. The subtle difference was that while being sent into the field by the museum, the ethnographer had several other "clients" for whom he worked at the same time as a go-between. This was public knowledge, and Barbeau himself made no attempt to hide it, writing in his article for the Royal Society of Canada⁶ that a certain angel by Jobin went to Toronto, his *Napoléon* to the Quebec Provincial Museum, a painting of the *Good Shepherd* to the National Gallery of Canada. His field notebooks are filled with similar allusions: "Interesting house for Traquair [...] a three-foot square rag rug (like Lismer wants) [...] at Charles-Aimé Giguère's, Saint-François Nord, a spinning wheel for Bruchési [...] a leaf quilt already seen, sold to Miss Fox [...] bought by Toronto artist [...] sculpture from the old church in Château-Richer for National Gallery [...] wooden clock \$15, sent to C.T. Currely, The Royal Ontario Museum [...] for McGill, 31 pieces of architecture and rolls of drawings \$75 to \$100 from Jobin's studio." It is true that the researcher had already worked for other institutions, and that he knew how to accommodate his passion for collecting while cultivating relations:

The Marius Barbeau collection of objects is much smaller, since at the time folklore was principally defined by oral literature: the collection devoted to French Canada is divided between two divisions for reasons to do with the Museum's history. The largest group is in the History Division and is made up of 527 objects, including 20 blankets, 17 candlesticks, 44 braided garters, 16 moulds, 19 rugs, 17 Assomption sashes, 142 textiles samples, and more. Some 111 artifacts of an exceptional aesthetic quality are held in the Folklore Division.

"I can say that I have furnished a number of museums in Canada, like the Chambly Museum and the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial House in St-Lin. At various times in my career, the Royal Ontario Museum asked me to purchase totem poles and medicine men's materials. I also collected these types of objects for the University of British Columbia."⁷

Dissemination At All Costs

Collecting initially served the goals of research. The ethnographer would be interested in Assomption sashes, for example, and would have the museum purchase forty-four handbraided garters so he could write a monograph⁸ on the subject as well as a descriptive catalogue describing two hundred sashes. But to this research function, Barbeau added a full-scale operation of dissemination that he headed up himself, parallel to the exhibitions at the museum. A tireless communicator, Barbeau used both the national collection and his own personal collection to illustrate the articles with which he flooded not only the province but all of Canada, from Toronto to Vancouver. Although most of his publications were in Quebec or the rest of Canada, others appeared in the United States, Europe and even South America. The prolific writings of Barbeau and some of his contemporaries were based on a practice that seems to have been common in the period between the two wars. An original text could be retained by several publishers, sometimes several years apart.⁹ The enormous reserves accumulated throughout his years in the field provided him with the illustrations he needed. Through newspapers and journals, some artifacts achieved a high public profile that raised them to the level of symbols of our culture. It should be noted, however, that unlike his contemporary, the Reverend Lionel Groulx, Barbeau was not waging a nationalist campaign.¹⁰ The ethnographer's motives were grounded in a broader scientific interest, even though they were also part of the prevailing trend in ethnography and folklore studies dedicated to the preservation of a folk culture in continuity with French culture.¹¹ It was rather a chain of social and historical events, combined with the growth

of nationalism between the wars, that would retrospectively associate Marius Barbeau with the proponents of nationhood.¹²

Ideological Harping

The intensive dissemination of the collection leads us to examine the discourse associated with it and its underlying ideology. Marius Barbeau's texts are filled with references to the nobility of our French roots. In a single, fifteen-page presentation to the members of the Royal Society, we find no less than eight explicit allusions¹³ to the Renaissance, most recently reembodyed by his favourite sculptor.

Louis Jobin was the last of our great artisans. With him, the French Renaissance that survived here almost two centuries after its demise in Europe, has finally died. [...] Spiritually, Jobin was of the school of Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci [...] da Vinci and his disciple Jobin shared the same family tree, now uprooted. On the branches of this tree ripened magnificent fruit: the masterpieces of the Renaissance in Italy and France, and even in America.

The comparison is flattering, to say the least. One senses a thesis tailored to the collection. From there to claim that the collection itself was more or less oriented for the good of the cause... Recent studies show that our predecessors did not hesitate to be selective with the ethnographic material, rejecting elements they considered too heterogeneous.¹⁴ Nor did Barbeau avoid the temptation to enhance reality, as in the case where he affronted an expert of the oral culture of Labrador. Unhappy with the transcriptions of songs collected by MacEdward Leach, he demanded extensive changes "so that the transcriptions would reflect what he as a musician thought the performers should be singing and what

Is Folklore Dying Out?

Folklore handbooks, often accompanied by songs and narratives, still exist in several places. But in a way they've gone underground before they disappear. Yes, disappear, for our era disavows them, thrusting them mercilessly into the background. Mistakenly, we consider them as the heritage of the uneducated, the poor. Yet they contain a wealth that is incomparable. Instead of conserving them, instead of transposing them the way we ought to into the modern sphere of literature, music and art, we prefer a culture that is borrowed, imported and flashy. The juke box whose wailings are set off at the drop of a coin, and the often stupefying emanations of the radio, have taken over our leisure and our tastes, and vilified them. Alas! Such is the folk language of today.

Marius Barbeau, "Notre folklore, un élément de culture promis à l'abandon?", La Presse, Montréal, 23 June 1954.

Barbeau's vision of Quebec arts was built on the foundations of the transmission of professional craftsmanship. He believed that our artistic tradition was rooted in the French Renaissance, introduced to the country with the Cap-Tourmente school, and that it died out with sculptors Jean-Baptiste Côté and Louis Jobin, considered the last forces of resistance against uncontrolled industrialization and Americanization.

Mario Bédard, Marius Barbeau et l'art au Québec : bibliographie analytique et thématique. Québec, Université Laval, Outils de recherche du CELAT No. 1, 1988, p. 17.

he believed they thought they were singing rather than what they actually sang."¹⁵ The anecdote reveals the tendency to standardize published material, both his own and that of later researchers.

Barbeau had a certain idea of culture and sought to shape the material collected so that it would conform to his vision of how it should be. This image of a level of purity below which the rest was deemed decadent was not unlike what the Romantics called "the golden age." References of the sort cannot help but colour the scientific process, and as we have seen, they call for certain modifications in order to conform to the higher vision. In material culture, the objects collected also had to meet Barbeau's aesthetic criteria:

Mr. Bouchard said that Marius Barbeau brought them hooked rugs that had lace edgings and Barbeau asked them to take off the lace.¹⁶

Barbeau also sought traces of a culture that conformed with his premises, and he collected accordingly. The modern lace edging deformed the original purity of the rug, and thus had to be eliminated to satisfy the canons of the genre. Barbeau's selection seems to have been based on a discrimination in favour of the past, the old romantic tendency that favours the remembrance of things past to the detriment of those we have around us every day, too commonplace to be worthy of note.

These examples lead us today to qualify somewhat the scope of the testimony left by Marius Barbeau: his body of work is nonetheless impressive, and remains the starting point for ethnological research in Quebec. However, for a just appreciation of it, it must be placed within the context of its ideology, complete with its blind spots and prejudices. Otherwise, we run the risk of endlessly extolling the same virtues and painting the portrait of an idealized rather than a real, live culture.¹⁶ For a true understanding of Barbeau, perhaps we have to confront him with other testimony from the period. Where is the evidence of the urban, Americanized and industrial culture that he scorned so much?

We are well aware that this brief presentation does not answer this and many other questions. But we would like to consider it as the germ of a debate, arising from the confrontation of the ideologies that lie behind each collection. The remembrance of things past painstakingly reconstituted by Marius Barbeau shone with the last glimmerings of the golden age. In its wake, other collectors would take up the torch and rekindle our memories in their turn.

The English Collections

IT IS REMARKABLE THAT FROM THE END of the 1930s, which marked the end of Marius Barbeau's activities as a collector, up until the beginning of the 1970s, a Quebec perspective of Quebec was never seen in the National Museum.¹ During the twilight years of the Quiet Revolution, the only collections that ensured the presence of Quebec folk art were those of English collectors, and they did so in a rather paradoxical fashion. There was a drive to build up the artifacts collection of the folklore division, which until then had been devoted to the oral culture. The Nettie Sharpe collection was the largest private collection to enter the Museum's holdings at that time.² Because her contribution is characteristic of the entire period, we have decided to examine it in detail.

The owner of this collection that is almost exclusively devoted to Quebec culture³ belonged to what could be called the "enlightened" English community of Quebec. For health reasons, Mrs. Sharpe's father (her maiden name was Covey) had decided to move his family to Woburn, a small village near Lake Mégantic. At the end of the last century, one of the last options for tuberculosis sufferers was to move to mountainous regions where the air was very dry. Mr. Covey, who was of American origin, had married a Scotswoman who had immigrated to Sherbrooke with a group of her fellow countrymen to work in the textile industry. Nettie Sharpe's parents never learned to speak French, but the children integrated readily into the community, and Mrs. Sharpe retains fond memories of the experience. The first piece in the collection, a little milk glass rooster, was collected in 1934, but it was not until the late 1940s, when she moved to Montreal, that the young Mrs. Sharpe began to collect objects systematically. On 8 June 1950, with the purchase of the ancestral home in Saint-Lambert where she lives to this day, Mrs. Sharpe sealed her attachment to Quebec's culture.

The objects of the collection were amassed in the francophone community and subsequently sold on anglophone markets, attesting to Mrs. Sharpe's membership in both communities. The collection's arrival at the Museum was marked by this same duality, since negotiations began through a curator who, unlike Mrs. Sharpe, had a very poor command of French and did not share her affinities for Quebec culture. Since the task of a curator is to select and document objects, the lack of empathy with the culture led to choices whose reasons were not always clear. As well, there are a number of lamentable gaps in information, and this poses serious problems in determining the representativity of the col-

Who is that tall woman there? She jumps over streams, it's as if she were a deer...

Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.

lection. With all of the prestige associated with having such a sizable collection among the national collections, the operation only confirmed all of the biases inherent in the acquisition of collections.

The participation of private collectors in the Museum's acquisition process weakens the scientific idea of research, since in a way the responsibilities of the researcher are delegated to professional dealers, whose interests do not necessarily coincide with those of the institution. An example that comes to mind is the collector who seeks to protect his sources by demanding confidentiality...

On the other hand, the presence of private collections is inevitable in the history of museums, beginning with the curio cabinets that preceded today's institutions. In the 20th century, we cannot underestimate the role played by art dealers in the development of avant-garde painting, nor that of modern American painters who took a fancy to folk art and began collecting long before wealthy art patrons.⁴ By working the same system, the Museum merely perpetuated a well-established elitist tradition.

With respect to the Sharpe collection, the English connection can be traced back to the very premises for the acquisition, since it was Russell Harper who officially introduced the collector to the Museum's directors in very flattering terms.⁵ The year following the art historian's report, the National Museum gave the go-ahead for a full-fledged operation, with the purchase of some 648 objects. In recalling these antecedents, which in a way constitute the hidden face of the collection, we cannot help but wonder about the type of regard these outside observers directed toward local culture—in this case, that of Quebec.

There were not really any explicit "selection criteria" in building up the Sharpe collection:

I never hesitated, [...] I may not have a university education, but what I have here [pointing to her heart] can't be taught in books.

Did Nettie Sharpe ever regret a purchase?

Never, it was always love at first sight, instantaneous.⁶

French Canada has been essentially a mosaic of rural communities in which the habitants have comprised the bulk of society until recent years. In their vivacity and Latin exuberance they differ from Canadians of Anglo-Saxon descent. [...] They have looked on their own resources for their simple joys and pleasures, and have embraced the Roman Catholic faith with the uncomplicated trust of their peasant forebears in France.

Russell Harper, "Folk Sculpture of Rural Quebec: The Nettie Sharpe Collection", *Antiques* No. 103, April 1973, p. 724-733.

However, another folk art specialist—from Nova Scotia, but no matter—Gerald Ferguson, also a researcher in the museum's folklore division in the early 1980s, has left us with notes that can be applied to the motivations of this type of collector:

The overriding characteristic that binded what I collected with what was established in the field, might be characterized as a "pre-industrial revolution sensibility" regarding of the date of its production. [...] I am foremost interested in esthetic qualities, be it a walking stick, a decoy or a whirlygig. I am concerned with formal qualities; a patinated surface, decoration, shape relationships, etc., and only marginally with the original functional role of the object. My approach is essentially one of an estheticist.⁷

For Sharpe, the aesthetic preoccupation was concentrated on the productions of "others," those she still calls "French Canadians" and with whom she maintains privileged ties that date far back into her early childhood:

There were no other anglophones in the village in Woburn. It was a very small village of four hundred inhabitants, a little village two miles from the border, and we were far from the schools. We had to go to the little French-Canadian school.

My father came from the States. He was a lumber merchant, and he had French Canadians working for him. My mother was a Presbyterian Scot.

I was never at home. I didn't like my mother, because she was strict. When school was over, I'd go to the Larochelle's place. My mother used to say, "You're never here! Stay here." But I would always go and play with Fernande Larochelle, who was my age. Her mother was nice. I liked it there, it was interesting to be on the land with the animals and everything that went on. They had a beautiful farm, you know. Cows, horses, little sheep... there was everything. Roosters and chickens too. And Madame Larochelle did everything herself. She made her own bread, twice a week. When we'd arrive home from school at four o'clock, she would be taking her bread out of the oven, two enormous loaves. She had a cloth on her big kitchen table. It was long: eight or ten of us would sit around the table, and she would slice the bread, a beautiful hot crust, and we'd have it with the wonderful butter she made. It was delicious. She made good blood sausage, too. I'd go to Fernande's house, and she'd say, "They're butchering today. We'll go hide in the cupboard and plug our ears so we can't hear the little pigs squealing."⁸

Unlike that of Barbeau, the Sharpe collection did not originate with a scientific project, and it had to meet financial requirements. Collecting in the field was always carried out with a view to resale somewhere down the line. Nettie Sharpe began as a picker (bargain hunter). It was only later, when she became enchanted with the shapes and colours she was amassing, that she began to build up her own personal collection:

In the beginning, I used to go door to door. I had no money, and my husband didn't speak French, and he wasn't interested. But I would take the tram or the train, I'd look at the map and say: Okay, what small village can I do from Montreal? I'd go from door to door, I had maybe eight or ten dollars in my bag, no more. I'd take paper shopping bags along with me [...] it wouldn't take me long to fill them. I'd catch the bus home in the afternoon, around four or five o'clock, and get out at Dupuis, the big department store. From there I'd take the 3A to go to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I'd have my two bags full of this and that. I'd be laughing, I was happy.⁹

Thanks to her intimate knowledge of the francophone milieu that would serve her throughout her career, Nettie Sharpe is an invaluable informant. The stories she tells, like the objects of her collection, attest to her lyrical vision of the community:

Often I tell people stories, like the fellow from the United States who looked after a museum—he wanted me to tell him about French-Canadian things. I said to him: I'm going to tell you a story. The big Larochelle barn, they had to raise the roof during the summer, and so under each little swallow's nest—oh, I remember it like it was yesterday—they put a little platform and something else underneath that to hold them in place, all the way around! I said to him, can you see an Englishman or an American going to all that trouble for some swallows?¹⁰

The collector went into partnership with a friend and shop owner to sell the Quebec furniture she collected in the countryside. Business seems to have been good, since the Westmount antique dealer, Mrs. Foss, whose store was on Green Street, had five cabinetmakers working for her. Through the initiatives of Nettie Sharpe, most of the merchandise, which was originally made up of American antiques, shifted to specialize in French-Canadian furniture. The clientele came from the upper class and the wealthy middle class, where the two business women had ready access: "The English liked French-Canadian things."

This business context was to have an influence on the nature of the collection. One is immediately evident: the proliferation of certain standard objects, be they decoys, butter stamps, maple-sugar moulds or hooked rugs. This abundance can be explained by a market in search of small products that can be easily integrated into any decor. With the subtle play of supply and demand, the object-as-cultural-reference gave way to a consumer

In English, we call them tops.

—Oh! I hate that. What was it that we called them? Oh yes, "moines", they're called "moines," never use the word top! Heavens! I had one that was all set for spinning [with its string]. The young boys played with them...¹¹

product given an aesthetic symbolism. Barbeau collected only one wooden duck for the museum; there are no less than forty in Nettie Sharpe's collection.¹² Without questioning the remarkable quality of the objects, it must be said that the Sharpe collection reflects the trends in the antique market of the times.

With respect to information on the collection, except for the carvers, who had an ongoing and privileged relationship with the collector, the identification of the pieces remains quite vague¹³, in accordance with the rather condescending practice in this field. Yet the documentary poverty of the Sharpe collection has already been severely criticized. When Elizabeth Collard, the leading authority on Canadian pottery, was asked to comment on the pieces in the Sharpe collection, the specialist warned "that great caution must be taken in any use of the information supplied by Mrs. Sharpe" and warned the Museum against "many errors of fact which the Museum would be irresponsible in perpetuating."¹⁴ Even though this warning concerns only a fraction of the Sharpe collection, it is a sign that should put us on our guard. And if we follow this line to its logical conclusion, would there not be a certain positive (monetary) consideration that would be well served by the weakness of the documentation? In some ways, accessibility to the largest number and the great popularity of "antiques" cultivates the practice of anonymity, since "no name" pieces sell for less and thus more rapidly than signed works. In this type of amateur collection, an object removed from its context and invested with a decorative function can stand on its own as an object of aesthetic consumption, no matter what its origin.

We will also see that market law influenced the content of the collection, even down to the choice and treatment of its themes. To meet the demands of the English clientele, certain types of objects were given special preference. An example taken from another collection illustrates the dynamics that links the cultural product, like any other consumer product, to its clientele. Patrick Morgan commissioned a rug from a Chicoutimi artisan, most likely Marie-Paule McLean. The American architect had done a great deal to promote the painters of Charlevoix in the late 1930s, organizing annual "art" exhibitions in Pointe-au-Pic. The hooked rug in question here represents Christ's entombment and was manufactured according to Morgan's instructions during the winter of 1938, and conserved since then by his wife, Maud Morgan. The account books she kept of these annual sales mention a large hooked rug under the heading Women's Work 1938, followed by the name of Irma McLean. The underlined "c" characterized the Scottish line of McLeans in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. Thanks to this clue, the younger sister of the artisan was tracked down: Thérèse, who helped Marie-Paule in her work at the time. The author was indeed Marie-Paule McLean and not Irma, which was probably a simple mistake.¹⁵ Based on family testimony, it was established that Marie-Paule McLean produced several impressive

rugs for the rich Americans who had summer cottages in Pointe-au-Pic. Her sister remembers a hunting scene that was long on display at the Manoir Richelieu. The Christ's Entombment rug, offered initially to the Laure Conan regional museum and then to the Chicoutimi Museum¹⁶, was acquired by the National Museum in 1982 by the intermediary of curator Jean-François Blanchette. It is clear that the subject of the rug was inspired by popular religion, with all the attributes of the passion and the entombment, but it is not a traditional work for all that. Its unusual theme, "extraordinary" dimensions and even the kind of material employed make it an atypical work. Thérèse McLean remembers that Morgan had brought an illustration to the workshop to be used as a model¹⁷. This information corresponds to the testimony of Maud Morgan, herself, who talks about a certain underglass painting, brought back from Germany in 1931, which unfortunately has been lost.¹⁸ Research led to the recent discovery, at a collector's in Sainte-Foy, of several old lithographs from the United States and Europe that depict virtually the same scene of the body of Christ watched over by two angels¹⁹. It was most likely a holy image similar to these but on a smaller scale that was given to the artisan as a model. A champion of folk art with a local flavour, Patrick Morgan claimed he never asked anything more of artists than to paint their immediate environment: interiors, daily activities, etc. Otherwise, the native artists would have had the annoying tendency to depict lions and exotic scenes²⁰. In fact, the demands of the market put a strong emphasis on the picturesque and the domestic universe. In the case of the rug,

There was no religion in my family, my father didn't believe in any religion. All he said when we were little, because we went to the French-Canadian school, my father - an American - he said: There is no heaven and there is no hell, talking about the things we were taught - do this or that, you'll go to heaven, you'll go to hell, all that... that's all he had to say about it. He never talked about religion, or contradicted it in any way, ever. And my mother was a Presbyterian Scot, and there [in Woburn] there weren't any. But I was always into the churches, at Christmas and that. I'd go up close to the holy table, that's what it was called. I'd look at the Baby Jesus. What I liked was the artistic aspect, I wasn't a believer, but I liked all the things that happened at church... I went often, oh! how I loved the smell, that was the best part, but I didn't go for the religion. And I never talked about it. I used to go, I'd follow the service and I thought it was all lovely, the ceremonies and all that, and especially the priests - now there was ceremony for you, eh!

Morgan's intervention for an illustration of popular religion - or rather, his idea of it - only casts doubt on the authenticity of this representation. The return to the iconographic sources of Christ's Entombment shows us how the illustration, taken from international Catholic imagery, ended up in the work of a Quebec artisan of Scottish roots via the intermediary of an American of Irish origin, and Anglican to boot... In such instances, traditional work has indeed submitted to the dictates of the Outsider to produce a cultural product that conforms to the expectations of the client.

This shift of tradition towards preconceived images brings us to the subject of stereotypes. The collections of English collectors like Nettie Sharpe are filled with primitively made objects on rural and religious themes that refer to the image of a traditional, inward-looking Quebec. Just take the collector's favourite carver Philippe Roy and his timorous, touching works as an example. There is a world of difference between his respectful representations and the wonderfully fanciful work of the likes of Alphonse Grenier or Hosanna Dupuis. The rustic paradise embodied therein seems to have fulfilled a certain nostalgia for the exotic on the part of the civilized world.²¹

There are numerous other aspects that should be examined in the collections of English collectors, starting with the continuity with high tradition that seems to have been requisite. Sharpe sought for characteristics of French style and was continuing in Barbeau's tradition when she collected 18th century candlesticks or the works of animal carver Damase Richard. For readers who wish to continue this comparative analysis, the works in the catalogue provide some pieces of evidence...

Ultimately, it seems clear that the English collectors reconstructed the portrait of a culture to match their own perceptions of it in building their collections. The reassuring results are above all a reflection of the vision of the Outsider. The Nettie Sharpe collection is evocative of the mental image the English had of a certain Quebec. Our appreciation of the collection must begin with the awareness of this filter that colours the representation of ourselves.

The Patenteux Collection

CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS had already recognized the mythopoetic virtues of tinkering and noted the particular quality of inventiveness characteristic of tinkerers that allows them to make the most of the limited resources at hand.¹ With the collection of works by the *patenteux*, the vision of folk art is turned upside down. First of all, the semantics have come full circle: a derogatory term that was used disparagingly to describe a tinkerer's activity is now used to glorify the art of humility.

In the spirit that reigned in Quebec in the early 1970s, the word took on a new connotation and became the standard-bearer of this throwaway creation. Louise de Grosbois, Raymonde Lamothe and Lise Nantel, who sparked the discovery of the *patenteux*, were not professionals in the field; they were ethnologists in their own right. These art students with their meagre grants, who set out to investigate the culture of the common people, actually inaugurated a revolutionary practice by restoring voice to those who were entitled to it.² For the first time, the artists themselves were able to describe their work in words filled with simplicity and fantasy. Before, the emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of the objects had neglected a major aspect of their creativity, expressed here in the unadorned speech of those who had never spoken for themselves. The results of this study of the folk creators of nine regions of Quebec were published in a beautiful book, *Les patenteux du Québec*.³ Even though the works were not acquired by a single person, nor grouped together in a single place, the publication in many ways marked the advent of this collection. We can safely say that Alphonse Grenier, Edmond Châtigny, Hosanna Dupuis and Alcide Saint-Germain, to name but a few, were truly discovered by the authors of *Les patenteux*.

At the Museum, researchers who took an interest in the *patenteux* did so initially because of their interest in the material culture. Oral culture had been extensively covered by their predecessors, and interests were now turning to the more tangible heritage. Then, too, the criteria of appreciation for folk art had changed: choices were no longer based solely on aesthetic criteria, but on a comprehensive consideration of the phenomenon – to the extent that, according to research scholar Jean-François

Unfortunately, when we talk about folk art, we usually refer to the past. It is curious to note that the art of every day acquires prestige only once it has become history. Only then is it analyzed, scrutinized and taught, because then it can be integrated into the official culture. [...] We have taken a position vis-à-vis a social class whose cultural manifestations are ignored or scorned by the dominant culture.

Louise Degrois, Raymonde Lamothe and Lise Nantel, Les patenteux du Québec, Montréal, Paris press, 1978 (1974), p. 9.

Blanchette, "we collected some real monstrosities!"⁴ There was a radical change in tastes, as the attitude of elitist enjoyment of folk art was replaced by a social approach with determinedly populist overtones.⁵ The new canons of beauty flouted conventional wisdom; we could compare this process with those young writers who became ardent fans of *joual*.⁶ Indeed, Gérard Godin boasted at the time that he "even collected objects that were hideous and cherished them, considering them invaluable."⁷

This discrimination in favour of deviation made for the collection of numerous marginal works that until then had been poorly known and poorly viewed. A patenteux named Nelphas Prévost, renowned for his violins, was to see his other, far less prestigious productions collected for the Museum: driftwood constructions and decorative brackets for the basement bar started to make their way into the national collections... The spirit of the times, dedicated to progress, put the accent on individual capabilities. Creatively speaking, this period was characterized by the primacy of personal expression and personal discovery, rather than imitation and tradition⁸. The works collected bear witness to this trend with their idiosyncrasy and their unbridled creativity.

At the Museum, the interest in contemporary folk art really began with research into the material culture of Ukrainians in Canada. It was through the initiatives of Robert B. Klymasz that commercial products like teeshirts and drinking glasses decorated with folk-flavoured motifs began to become collector's items. From 1972, the curator incorporated these contemporary elements into his exhibitions, even though he suspected that "advocates of traditional folk art would refuse to consider these pieces part of the national heritage."⁹ However, such reservations were dismissed—after all, what is folk art if not a combination of tradition and evolution? The barriers were down, and henceforth a whole new range of objects were to make their way into the Museum—by the back door, at least, which explains the mixed success of the efforts of Pierre Thérberge¹⁰, a curator at the National Gallery of Canada, when he tried to find a taker for his collection of rocks by Arthème Saint-Germain. When the Gallery authorities were not too keen on housing this cumbersome in-

stallation, the hard-pressed Thérberge found a precious ally in Paul Carpentier of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. As the story goes, the Saint-Germain operation worked backwards: twenty years later the acquisition of the objects had still to be duly approved, with formal acceptance by the acquisitions committee and bestowal of an inventory number and photograph. The Saint-Germain rocks were actually given last-minute acknowledgment thanks to the current exhibition, whose iconoclastic selection process was based precisely on such unlikely works. As a result, the works were finally given official status...

The change in policy did not happen overnight. The Canadian Museum of Civilization continues to acquire objects from antique dealers. This was the case for the Féliçien Lévesque collection, purchased in 1990 in Connecticut, at a high price and without any documentation, even though the artist continues to produce in Cacouna! Generally, however, we can say that the ethnologists are gradually gaining ground and rectifying past mistakes.

The Hosanna Dupuis collection is typical of this roundabout process. This angelically named artist was discovered during the trend for *Les patenteux du Québec*¹¹, and subsequently, some of his works came onto the market. In 1980, the Museum acquired a large series of Dupuis' pieces through Gallery Graphics of Ottawa. However, as often happens when dealing with antique dealers, the collection came without any accompanying information. Almost fifteen years later, enquiries within the artist's native village unearthed his executor, and the Museum was then able to acquire several pieces that had narrowly escaped the Maskinongé hurricane, including three photograph albums attesting to Dupuis' prolific creativity, song manuscripts, a patent license and unpublished videos! True, his ornately decorated house still stands on the banks of the river, and there are a few commemorative plaques in the church. But in a few years' time, who will remember him? Only the Museum documents, collected to revive the memory of objects, will remain to attest to Hosanna Dupuis' delightful eccentricity.

In other cases, we are not so fortunate. The work of Lauda Parent entered the Museum in 1971 through a third party who apparently got it for a pittance and a few bottles of beer—a small collection of miniatures purchased without any more information on their author. Time passed, and the works fell into the obscurity of anonymity for lack of adequate research¹². Ten years later, curator Stephen Inglis decided to track down the author of these enigmatic pieces. He went to Sainte-Rose-de-Lima. Lauda Parent was no longer alive, but he was survived by his sister Fabiola, and the neighbours still had tales to tell. A life story was sketched out, family photo albums collected and a project for a monograph was launched, which unfortunately never came to fruition. Another decade went by, and I set out in turn in search of Lauda Parent.

The Association is not interested in trying to integrate these manifestations of innate sensibility into any kind of system of "higher" cultural values. We only want to point out the importance of these manifestations [...] and thus blur the artificial border between the "fine" arts and culture.

Greg Curnoe and Pierre Thérberge, "Manifeste de Saint-Éléuthère", The Association for the Documentation of Neglected Aspects of the Culture of Canada. London, 1974.

The village is now called Templeton, Fabiola too has died, and an old woman who had known Lauda Parent could tell me no more than "he had a good life..." We have come full circle, the witnesses have disappeared, and it is now too late to find eyewitness accounts.

Strictly speaking, there was no plan for a patenteux collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Carpentier gave the necessary impetus for the introduction of Arthème Saint-Germain, just as he became interested along the way in the wonderful Georges Bédard when he worked in Quebec City. But overall, his acquisitions were rare as he was taken up with other duties. Paul Carpentier's influence actually made itself felt through third parties. It was his colleagues Pierre Crépeau and Jean-François Blanchette, research scholars in the Folklore Division, who prepared the terrain. At the Museum, the patenteux were never the focus of a clearly defined objective as in the work of the authors of the book that bears their name. However, we can now safely say that their works will not longer be shunted aside as in the past, and that it will be considered worthy of acquisition when the opportunity arises.

In viewing the patenteux works, what strikes us first is the eclectic nature of both the materials and techniques employed in their creation.

The materials are base, to say the least—whatever was at hand was used, with no link whatsoever to the materials of the old school. We are far from precious woods and gold leaf: in their stead, we find plywood, beer bottle caps, Javex bottles—anything could be grist for the mill. As for technique, we immediately note that the great craft traditions that were passed down through the generations have died out. With Ernest Gagnon, for example, there is no attempt at capturing the effects of Renaissance perspectives, for the painting uses a toothpick to create his "one-of-a-kind" paintings. In the same vein, ceramicist Édouard Jasmin learned his basic techniques from magazines, and his pieces were never fired at a high enough temperature because he was afraid of starting a fire—consequently, his plates are extremely fragile.

The same contradiction in values applies on the thematic level, the same reversal with respect to traditional perceptions¹³. There are no longer any standard subjects or proprieties to be respected: for every Alphonse Grenier who stages his most torrid fantasies, there is a Lauda Parent who recreates his humblest dreams. Each installation varies according to the personality of its author, with the lack of established lines characteristic of the spirit of the times.

The attitude of collectors has changed as well. Gradually, the ethnological approach that favours direct contact with the informant has taken over. At the Museum, this has resulted in far more extensive documentation. For this in-depth approach, increasingly sophisticated techniques are making it possible to paint a complete picture of the process of creation. Successive visits to

the creator ensure a follow-up to the production; the observer no longer has to depend on his impressions alone, but can now make recordings of his interviews and organize rapid-volley photo sessions to capture the myriad expressions of his subject's face.

Even the fervent partisans of the "antique dealer school" were finally won over to the thrills of the documentary investigation. Thus Wes Mattie, the same person who had been Sharpe's mediator at the Museum, was put into contact with the exceptional work of Archélas Poulin, abandoned to the hands of dealers who were about to dismantle his trailer to sell off the carvings one by one. Alerted by his contacts in the milieu, the researcher arrived just in time to prevent the disaster and buy the pieces for the Museum. Bit by bit, his research allowed him to track down the daughter of the artist, who proved to be an invaluable source of information. This was an exceptional case where the two forms of procurement were able to complement one another in a fortuitous way.

Another element stemming from the ethnological approach is the emergence of inventories in the collections. Gone are the days of hit-or-miss collecting. The Museum has opted for more extensive study by collecting more systematically. Circumstances permitting, the entire production of an unknown artist may even be snapped up, as was the case for the hundred paintings by Georges Bédard. Naturally, there are exceptions to the rule: in 1993, for example, Jean-Yves Grégoire's liquor cabinet arrived without a curriculum vitae. The Museum might have abstained, but the "temptation to indulge" was too strong...

The patenteux collection deconstructs everything we had seen up until now. Traditional points of reference have shifted, and with them a vision of the world. Concurrently, iconographic sources of inspiration have multiplied: we still find the usual themes of daily life, nature, religion and history, but we also find images that have arisen from the subconscious, echoes of the consumer society, references to the great Christian or American Indian myths... This heady broth reflected a people that were increasingly determined to be accountable to themselves, with all their flaws and excesses. The collective image created by this collection is one of joyous deviance from the norm, corresponding to the optimism of an era when everything seemed possible. In this period of defiance of the values of consumer society, the works of the patenteux, created essentially for pleasure, were not for sale and for the time being, eluded the market.

Here too, we can sense the influence of the temporal context on the content of the collection. On the traces of the "no-holds-barred" ethnology that led to the discovery of the patenteux, professionals in charge of acquisitions for the Museum were determined to glean the pertinent information directly from the mouths of the producers. The populist slant that presided over

this approach was part of the wave of democratization linked to the Quiet Revolution, and many found it extremely irritating. Whatever one may think, it did take a certain amount of courage to affront the present and launch into an all-out investigation of creation. This does not mean that the reception was always enthusiastic: for many, still today, the art of the *patenteux* is no more than "backyard knick-knacks" that offend good taste¹⁴.

Yet there was a very legitimate curiosity underlying this exploration of the hidden side of ourselves. For the first time in our history, we were able to acknowledge a creative process untrammelled by the usual obligatory references to glorious antecedents. Paradoxically, it was also the discovery of our American-ness that was paid tribute with the collection of the *patenteux* of Quebec.

Narratives

Against all enclosures:

The "patenteux" of Quebec, some of whose works are gathered here, look like deviants and anarchists in our well-ordered society. In a sort of frenzy, of transport, they break all the rules and in so doing they protest against the boundaries and enclosures so beloved of the technocrats and bureaucrats who regulate our material and symbolic lives. It should come as no surprise if some people, confronted with this proliferation of shapes, colours and materials, find nothing more to say than "lacky," and turn away from these works, scandalized.

*Marcel Rioux, préface des Patenteux du Québec,
Montréal, Parti pris, (1978-1974).*

Georges Bédard

Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts

b. 1912

"I'M GOING TO TELL YOU MY STORY. You know why? So that you can understand why I do what I do, what a person does when they maybe have a gift or something and they're not too stupid, but they don't have the money...

I collect money: gold pieces, paper, all that sort of thing. I travelled around Canada for fifteen years... I wasn't a painter at all, it was nothing but a dream...

I took an engineering job at the age of eighteen; it was a living, but my heart wasn't in it.

But let's go back to the beginning. I was born in 1912. When you've only gone to school for three years and you've never learned to draw, and then you work as an engineer in four, five provinces, and then you decide to start painting when you retire... well, you paint according to your own ideas. I took my time, like with my series of three bridges and other things as well: personal dreams.

What I do isn't like the work of a specialist, a painter who does people. I'm not in that field. I've got four inventions of my own that I haven't shown anybody, for painting trees. Do you see those brush strokes and the relief? I made a tool for doing that. And this here, it's a glue bottle. What does that do? It's for strawberries. When you do a landscape, there's big trees; and on a farm, there's often strawberries on the land. So you do little strokes, little touches to make it look the way the land looks. This here, it's a strawberry garden. How do you like it?

Since I started painting pictures, I'm never satisfied with anything that I've painted. It would be a sin to say otherwise, to boast about what I do: it's not so great.

What I prefer is what's inside, my strength and skill come from inside myself. That's what makes me different from artists. I'm no artist with nice fancy paintbrushes and all that.

I wasn't a painter any more than the road makes paintings. It was just a dream...

Little men, prospectors. Look, they come for the fishing and they go off to look at the rocks, the land. They're sort of like pirates, in a way, they like danger...

It's just all sorts of little fairy tales—that's all it is! And half of it is just made up in my head, it's not even true...

I'm going to show you things you've never seen. You won't believe your eyes! You'll say, it takes an old bugger to do stuff like that! You won't be able to help it. You'll either say: it's instructive, this old guy's on the ball, or else you'll say: he's a nasty old man. I haven't got the skill to do something that looks really good. But I'm proud that what I do is unique. That's my strong point: what I do, you won't see anywhere else...

That's what it's always been like from the start, with reliefs like I showed you... something that smacks you right between the eyes.

What I prefer is what's inside, my strength and skill come from inside myself. That's what makes me different from artists. I'm no artist with nice fancy paintbrushes and all that. Those guys wouldn't want to dirty their hands in my kind of business. They've got brushes, see, for painting. They don't get into this messy kind of stuff, you know. That's where I'm one of a kind in Canada... I was dying to do all those kinds of things, but I had them all along, they were inside me. The teachers and other people said that I had an artist's hand, but my father told me to go off and learn to be an engineer. So I was actually betrayed by my parents. You end up in the saw mills when you're ten years old, and you end up being ignorant all your life. So I said, I'm going to get my revenge, because I was so mad that my father wouldn't understand me, wouldn't give me what I wanted... Oh yes, I suffered, and I got my revenge, because I was less poor than my father. For a while we had six saw mills, but I didn't take my little boys into the mill at the age of ten. I bought them skates and let them play... So I was mad and ambitious. And I'll go to my grave mad. Oh yes, justice... that's life. I had a tough life, I was treated badly. After that, I'd learned my lesson...

When I started painting, it was because I had to stay home because of my first wife's medical treatments. So I wasn't able to go out collecting. When I realized that, I said to my wife—we were living on the second floor—I said, if you don't mind, I'm going to paint things, just so I don't get bored. That's how it all started. So I began to paint, because with my wife sick, I was home for six months and I got bored. I was doing it for the kids at first, just to give them something. Then everybody started to say that what I was doing was good and that I should keep it up. That made me decide to keep on going.

I'm good thanks to history books, and I'm good at doing land contours, naked mountains: volcanoes, Mount St. Helen, Mount Everest, go figure. It's gravel. When it comes to trees, you've seen about what my limits are.

When I finish a painting, whether it's good, average or awful, it's always the best I could do ... I do it for myself.

The funny thing about a painting is, you can make it talk without explaining it. The frame and the painting speak for themselves. The tree doesn't speak, but if it's a pine or a birch, if it's made like a pine or a white birch, it talks in your head and you can read into it. That's what I practice...

My head works all the time. Even if I'm not working, I'm working in my mind, you know.

That means that I'm confident in myself without being proud. In life, you go sticking your nose into all sorts of things, but you're always the same person. You ask yourself all kinds of questions, you see all kinds of mysterious things you don't understand. Sometimes, you can't even understand yourself in some of the things you do. But you have to live with yourself. And when one thing doesn't work, if you try something else, stick your nose into something else, you might come out ahead. That's the first and last thing I can tell you. You've got to do the best you can, you've got to get ahead ..."

Noé J. Champagne

(Ti-Père Artiste)

Bishopton

b. 1919

"THERE'S WOMEN WHO'VE SAID TO ME, you're better at this than we are!

Well, you see, my embroidery is a way for me to relax when I'm sick of my other work, that's all it is. Sometimes I get up in the middle of the night. An idea comes into my head, and I get up so I can make a drawing of it. So I can tell you, it's like therapy for me.

In all of the pieces that I do, it's like a challenge with the colours. I always like a challenge, I've always worked with challenges. If you tell me that I can't do something, that's all it takes for me to try doing it. Stubborn as a mule, I am. I like colour. When a piece of work has lots of red in it, that means I was mad about something when I did it. There, you'll see lots of red in my work, and zig-zags like lightning. You know what they say, we express ourselves in our work.

I'll see a model in a book, I'll copy it, I'll draw it. But the colours, those are all my own. I take children's books... black and white drawings, oh, I like those. They leave me free to make up my own colours. But the trick is in arranging the colours of my rags. That's what the painters can't understand.

When my pants are all worn out, I'll wash them and make a

rug from them. Yep - my pants are going to go into a rug. You see these birds here? The blue around them, that was a women's nightgown. I had just enough. But I was missing a little bit; I had to pull it a bit so it would balance out...

I like to work with a sack that's had some sawdust or seed in it, because it makes a kind of starch for the burlap. And if you buy your burlap new from the store, it's dry, there's no juice in it. When you make a piece, you mustn't wash your sack, either, because if you wash it, you take out all the starch in your burlap. All you have to do to get the sawdust out is give it a bit of a shake. A while ago, I dragged sacks around in the car for fifteen days because of the smell of sawdust. If something is dirty or smells, I won't take it - but if it's just sawdust, then it's not dirty, and I'll use it.

Some people call me the rag painter. I'll go into town to go shopping, and they say, look, Ti-Père's in town this morning. Noé Champagne, who's that? Nobody knows me by that name anymore. I've been baptised, everywhere I go, it's Ti-Père. That's the way it is now. Don't even talk about Noé Champagne, they won't know who you mean. Then there's this goddamn beret that I have to wear all the time, now. That damn beret, does it ever get hot in the summer!"²

Edmond Châtigny

Saint-Isidore
b. 1895

"I'VE ALWAYS LIVED HERE IN SAINT-ISIDORE. I was a farmer. When I was on the farm, I was used to hard work. When I retired, with nothing to do, I was bored. That's what made me to decide to do these little things, flowers in wood, birds, then all sorts of things. I've been doing this for five years with a hand-saw and a little pocket knife. Sell them? You can't sell them! You don't do this stuff overnight!

When I was young, I'd take a knife and whittle. My mother said, I'll bet you could do something!

It's easy to do once something has already been started. I use the fenceposts at my son's place.

I use green, white, red, a bit of brown, This winter, I'm going to put everything down cellar because otherwise the colours fade. This year, I'll use a lot of green and white."³

Hosanna Dupuis

Maskinongé
1898-1987

"MY NAME IS HOSANNA, the name of Our Lord, but I'm no lord. My real name is Joseph Hosanna Napoléon Dupuis.

I began to be handy when I made my boat. It's something the likes of which you've never seen.

The idea of the shoe: I had a pair of shoes that looked like that. I looked at my shoes, and I said to myself, a yacht looks like a shoe.

I took a pencil, made a drawing, and there you go. That's how I did it. It was hard work, but I did it anyway. It's the most complicated piece I've done. I did it out in the sun, the rain, I got eaten alive by flies. It took about a year of work in my spare time. There's sixteen coats of paint on it. That's work for you! There were one hundred and twenty-four letters on the two sides. It was marked: Hosanna Dupuis, boat enregistré, Maskinongé, P.Q., Vive le roi des souliers, 1946-47.

I've done some things in my time!

I've tried my hand at everything. I can do just about anything: painting, soldering, electricity. I built these two houses. I do everything that I think of doing. I've done that since I was a little boy.

It all comes out of my own head.

I do the colours myself. The angels, I did them however I could, I'd never done any before. They were made from cardboard, it all had to be repolished so they'd be good and soft."⁴

Honour to the toys of God is respect for the toys of God. The toys are doves, the sun, the moon, the trees.

Alphonse Grenier

Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande
b. 1908

"I ALWAYS PLAYED THE VIOLIN and the accordion. I was always a carpenter. I've been a carpenter since I was yea high. I've built houses, churches, wagons. It's all things that come into my head. Sometimes on television, the puppets give me an idea, but in the end it comes from up here, in my head. There's eight months of work in each box. That's not counting the figuring out part, or the nights without sleep. There's not many who'd have the patience to do all that. I wanted to do something that had never been seen before, and would never be seen again. And I racked my brains to think of something—that's how bad I was bitten! I didn't have any pattern or model, it just came out of my head from thinking about it.

Take lessons? Where do you want me to go take lessons? I do things that have never been done... if I let myself go, the things I'd do, I wouldn't even dare show them to people..."⁵

"Ah well, those devils in the boxes there... it's me sometimes... the reason is that we must not make lovers all the time. There must be a bit of conflict too. Well, so there are devils, lovers, some swing, some dance, some play the fiddle. And it is like we say sometimes when there are hundreds of characters, there must be a bit of variety. Not always on the same style, if you don't mind."⁶

The woman with the apron, she has gold breasts that dance. On this shelf, it's all sorts of simple little things, all kinds of little inventions.

The devils: there's one who's trying to stab someone in the neck. All he does is move his feet around.

Édouard Jasmin

Montreal
1905-1987

"YOU COULD SAY I STARTED DOING POTTERY by trial and error at the age of sixty-nine. I had never been taught. I bought books on pottery, especially American books, and magazines. My son was a potter, but I never dared ask him to teach me, I told myself that I didn't want to make him waste his time, since maybe it wouldn't amount to anything. Anyway, I started to make pottery, but I had a bit of experience from working in sand. In ceramics, I continued the same process as in sand, but the result was different—it was solid, and it was fired.

I work in the evening, because during the day there's often somebody at the door, or my brother drops in to visit. Claude sometimes comes around, too. So during the day, I might start something and then have to stop. In the evening after supper, from eight o'clock until ten, eleven o'clock, I can get down to work without being interrupted. That's why I tend to work at night. Sometimes I get carried away, it might get to be eleven, twelve, sometimes even one in the morning. Nobody bothers me, I play the radio turned down low... you know, there's better music on the radio at night than during the day, so the atmosphere is nicer, more inspiring. It's dark everywhere, too, no distractions. During the day you watch the weather—it's raining, it's snowing. At night you don't bother looking, it's dark, so you stay inside, and you work better.

My secret is that I always look for the funny side of life, the good side. I prefer imaginary things that make people laugh, I like to try and put some humour in my work. I've noticed that it's better for your health if you look at the bright side. For example, I decided to do a fur coat in pheasant feathers, but the store had another window, because the pheasant feathers probably made an expensive coat. So they decided to have a sale on coats made from grey chicken feathers, cause they could be sold for less. They dyed the white feathers pink to make a modern look. They're even going to bring out pink chicken feather coats. That's what I like to do, fantastic stuff like that—it's impossible, nobody believes it, but it makes everybody laugh. It makes me laugh, and if people laugh at me I'm happy, I tell myself, they're having fun, they're laughing at me, but I got the first laugh."⁷

Félicien Lévesque

Cacouna
b. 1916

Story of the Flood

FÉLICIEEN LÉVESQUE SAID TO ME: "One fine day Noah, warned by the angel, asked his neighbours to help him build the ark. The neighbour said: 'no, I don't feel like it'. The water began to rise, he loaded up the ark with his animals, his little farmyard, his pig, his chicken, his sheep. No exotic animals. The waters rose. Noah was with his wife and children. They had food to eat, and the neighbour swam around for a while and then he drowned."⁸

Lauda Parent

1890-1977

"THE CARVINGS OF LAUDA PARENT were acquired by the CCFCs in 1971 from a man who had been his neighbour. Little information about the carvings was recorded at the time, and when, several years later, the neighbour was contacted for more information, Parent had died. Subsequent visits to the area where he lived and interviews with people who knew him yielded an intriguing if fragmentary picture of the artist. The group of 22 carvings initially acquired by the museum proved to be the entire known output of Parent. Produced from the 1930s to the 1960s, Parent's creations were part of a very private and personal vision. ... Parent carved for himself and until he gave his carvings away, there is little indication that anyone else knew about them. Generally speaking, each model is a complete unit in itself, a discrete scene."⁹

The minuscule, a narrow doorway if there ever was one, opens onto a world. The detail of something can be the sign of a new world, a world that like all worlds, contains the attributes of greatness. [...] The imagination seeks a pretext for multiplying images, and as soon as it is captured by an image, it enhances its value... Values are swallowed up in the miniature. The miniature allows us to dream.

Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1957, p. 146.

Archélas Poulin

1891-1969

"HE WORKED ON THE LOG DRIVE, and a load of logs fell on his back and injured him. He began carving the last year he was in bed. During the brief time he could stand up, he did the Life of Our Lord based on the twenty-four Stations of the Cross. He was always carving little things for us, little wooden figures; he'd bring them to us and we'd play with them, and all sorts of other things he'd make for children to play with. But he really began all that with the Stations of the Cross. His first figures were all made of wood. Everything was in wood, even the clothes. But those ones didn't move. In Boston, one of his employees stole his exhibit. He got his trailer back, but not the exhibit - it still hasn't been found. After he was robbed, he came back to Canada and held another exhibit, but not the same subject. This time, it was the Life of Man during the twelve months of the year, what men did in the old days. It took him a good two years to finish the work. There were twelve scenes, and the dance hall was done afterwards.

If people wanted to give something, if they liked the exhibit, they gave anything they wanted. Most of the time, people were pretty generous. There were days when there wasn't any money.

He was very handy for clothing. He'd show us, he'd take what he wanted to have and he'd say: Can you make that? And we had all sorts of frills and things, and he'd show us the old way. We did all the costumes in the old style. We'd dress them in costumes, because the heads were made of wood and the rest was in metal, rods and anything we'd put underneath to make the body.

But it was always appreciated, because he needed that to survive. That's what he lived on.

I stayed with him for a while, because I worked during the day, and he didn't sleep at night. So he'd use the other bed that was along here... and I'd sleep through the night, then go off to work, and he'd take the bed during the day, because he'd only sleep an hour or so, here and there. He wasn't a great sleeper. When he got something into his head, he'd wake me up. He could wake me in the middle of the night and say Annette, we'll try this, because he got it into his head to try something. So we experimented with all sorts of things: the boxes, the movements of such and such a thing to make it work. It was around 1942, I think. It was good fun. We helped him... because I'd get ideas, too. We'd try until we'd get it to work. If it took an hour, well, it took an hour; if it took two hours, it took two hours. Time wasn't a problem... especially for me, I didn't mind, I was glad to work on something until we got it to work.

There was just me who stayed there in the garage with him.

I'd go to work, and then we'd do these things in the evening. And there was my uncle, his brother, my uncle Ulrich. When he needed a piece, he'd make a model from a bit of metal and he'd ask his brother to bring him pieces like it, in metal, from RCA Victor. He [my father] showed him the models, what to do, and my uncle would bring them. Then we'd try them out to see whether they'd work. They had to be connected. I still have a clock downstairs here, we'd take pieces from inside it, tiny little wheels, the dials of a clock. We'd take all the little wheels that were in there, can-openers, all kinds of things, anything that came to hand that we thought might be good.

Since the accident, he was never the same man again ever, but he had amazing courage. And he was never discouraged. If things weren't going well, sometimes he wouldn't even have the money to go to the other place the next day, he'd go there at night to open, and he'd say: now I'm going to make some money. Then, after that, he'd pay his employees and continue his work between one place and the next.

Nothing was too much for him. He could do anything: cook, he sewed well, he knitted... he did the cooking on his own, and he was a good cook. He looked after the children when he came to the house. He was always the one who did the dishes. That was his job: leave the dishes for me, he'd say. That's all I'm good for, that's my speed. So he'd do that. And he played music. He entertained us with games, any kind of game. He played checkers.

He had to keep himself busy with something, otherwise... he had to have something in his hands. We'd go to visit, and he always had something he'd made to show us. We'd give our opinion. Sometimes it was good, sometimes not so good. Then we'd talk about it. We hardly every talked about this and that like other families, it was always about what he'd made."¹⁰

Nelphas Prévost

Saint-André-Avelin
b. 1904

"IT WAS LIKE THAT WHEN I FOUND IT, this root. It was opened up like that, see, by the weather. There was a lot of dead wood around it. Victim wood -that's what we call rotten wood. I walk along by the water's edge and I find it in the dry grass. Sometimes, you know, it's really hard to decide what to make with it. When it's hard to decide, I just keep it lying around in sight. I'll start working on something else, then all of a sudden I'll stop and look at it there, and I'll think: maybe I could do such and such a thing with it, that might work out well.

I like walking in the woods, and I get my ideas there. If I see something that looks like a little animal, then I get the urge to work at making something with it. Sometimes you can find pieces just about anywhere. Sometimes a branch or a tree is broken by the wind. Then the stump eventually rots, and the wood starts to heat up and eats away at itself.

Joined roots are a real puzzle. How did those two roots end up joined together like that? But that's the way it was: I found it just like that. It was brought in by the high water in the spring, and as the water level went down, and with the wind, it was pushed onto the land. Sometimes in one night the water goes down. Maybe the water'll go down a couple of inches, four or five inches, and that little piece of wood will stay dry. And it can go on like that until fall comes. When you wander along the edge of streams, you find all kinds of little things.

You don't often find people who are interested in this kind of stuff. Walking in the woods, along the water's edge... Oh, sure, you'll get people walking along the edge of the river, but it's for the fishing: they're going out for trout. But for me, it was never a question of fishing. I just like to walk; it's good for your digestion, for one thing, and then along my way, wherever I go, if I find little things like these I'll put them in my pack and bring them back to the house. And later on, I'll make something with them.

I was coming along with a fish made out of wood, there. I took that from a cedar stump that was uprooted along the edge of the river. The cedar had been uprooted by the wind. The others took posts from it to make a fence, but the stump and the roots were still left. I started looking at the whole thing. Then I took a hand-

Many years ago, Mr. Prévost made a naked woman out of a barrel. Because of his neighbours' criticism, who called him a disgraceful old man, he broke the piece and never made another like it. Probably the long woman's fingers and the red and black touches are a subtle substitute for the original expression.¹

saw and cut a piece here, a piece there. I was a tenant at a farmer's place, and I was making my fish by the edge of the water. My farmer came along with a load of hay. He says, where'd you get that handsome fish you've got there? I say, I got it from your big cedar that fell over just there, near the river. He says, you mean to say that it's made out of wood? Well yes, I said, it's wood. Well then, he says, you're pretty good! It was a nice big trout, made from a root of that cedar stump."¹¹

Arthème Saint-Germain

Thurso

1896-1974

"I ALWAYS HAD SOMETHING in front of the door. I began with rocks, I was carting sand then, and I'd set the nicest rocks to one side. Then I'd take them back here with me, that's why there's so many rocks around the house.

I'd taken a Coca Cola sign and I lettered the whole thing with bottle caps, and then I painted it. At first, the first year I left it like that, but it got a bit rusty. After that I painted it all in colours, it made you sit up and take notice. It got taken—it was out by the road, and one day we came along and it was gone. Someone took it.

First thing I did, I started with the outdoors. I wanted to make things that would turn in the wind. The third neighbour along the way had this metal wheel - a wheel for pumping water, he had it in his shed. And he saw that I was trying to make things for myself out front, here. He turned up one day with that wheel in his truck, and the metal pipe that goes with it. He said, this has just been sitting in my shed and I'll never use it, so I'm giving it to you. When I saw that, I made the rack and I stuck it in there and I got on. After that, I said to myself, it's pretty easy to get that turning in the wind. I went to the second neighbour, Mr. Deschambault, and he had cart wheels, great big wheels. They said to me, if you want them, take them. I brought them home and fixed them up, I put them on bearings, on axles so that the wind would have a chance. As soon as there was a breeze, they turned. People think it's strange, when they go past and see that. They stop and come and have a look."¹²

From the moment the garden exists, it destroys everything that lies outside it, it swells to the dimensions of the Universe. A universe that it becomes possible to mould, to embrace and love.

Pierre Grimal, "Jardins des hommes, jardins des rois", Traverses 5-6, 1976, p. 70.

Georges Racicot

Calumet

b. 1937

"IN A CITY I DIE OF BOREDOM, I don't know what to do. But there's people who get bored in the woods. Not me, though - I perk up in the woods. I like the forest. I like the peace and quiet. I'll go into the woods, and if I find a special piece of wood in a tree I'll take it home. I'll spend my time working on it, whittling away at it.

I was born on April 8, 1937, in Vendée. It's near Saint-Rémi d'Amherst, about twelve miles from Lac-des-Plages, a little village between Labelle and Saint-Jovite. I was an edger man, the one who lines up the wood for the machine. Oh, I did a lot of other jobs too, but that was the one I did for the longest.

When I see a piece, depending on its shape, I can right away see something in it. You don't find good pieces every day. It's because a piece that is naturally shaped like an animal or any other kind of natural thing, you don't find it all that often, you know. When I find one, I'm always surprised. And then I know right away if it's right, if I can keep working on it - say, if the head is in the right place, and all that, the body, so that I can do the rest: you make its eyes, you make its mouth. Oh yes, I know right away how I'm going to work with it when I see it. Sometimes I'll set out and spend two, maybe three hours down by the river. Because in the spring, there's a lot of wood that comes down the river. Sometimes there's pieces that are yea thick, and it's all tangled up: you've got to have an eye for it. Yes, indeed. It can take a while, sometimes, when it's all piled up deep like that. I look and I look and then all of a sudden, bingo! I find something I can use.

I made a fence at my place, and I had five or six cedar logs left over, little logs like that. After I'd finished, I said, that would make a nice head to decorate my bullock's pasture. I'll make an Indian head. And I put it out in the pasture, and when the guys came to see my bull, they said, oh! Nice place your bull's got for himself, there!

That little round piece, it was out back in the bullock's field. Yes indeed, I'd made a little fence and I put up a post with rocks at the base and I hung it there. The bullock was pleased with it. I'd go and bring him in in the evening so nobody would steal him - sometimes people steal things, you know. I'd go get him every night, and in the morning I'd put him back in the field. In the evening, I'd put him in the little yard behind the house. I'd fence him in there, and he'd lie down. I had straw and that in there for him. He had a place for drinking, a place for eating. And I'd decorated it all up, it had a nice gay look to it.

I fixed it up according to my own ideas. I took a cedar picket like that and started working on it, and then I gave it an Indian's

head. For the colour, I thought to myself, Indian totems are always in bright colours, and so I painted it all up with red and blue and black.

I like Indian totem poles, I like them a lot. I can see it right by the road, there. If I see one somewhere, I think it looks good, looks nice. I always thought they looked good, I liked to see them from a distance."¹³

When I went down to the Rivière de la Rouge to look for wood with the children, I found the piece that made the table top here: it's a piece of pine. It's good and wide, and it's all worn by the waves.

THE ENGLISH AMATEURS' COLLECTION

Léo Fournier

Laprairie

b. 1927

"THE FIRST TIME I WENT THERE, I went inside, it was his son Denis who was there, and I didn't like what I saw. I said, Denis, don't you have anything better? He went upstairs and when he brought this down, he said, nobody wants these because they're naked. I said, I want it, I'll buy it. And Denis was always saying, Papa, don't do that. I said to him, Denis, don't say that to your father, he was inspired to make this, and he sees in his head what he wants to make. Don't go telling him to do things this way or that way, never, never tell him that.

He used to repair houses, and make all kinds of things from iron. He's not someone who took lessons. The artisans never took lessons, ever. In their own creations, they weren't inspired by something else, it all just came out of their heads. Léo Fournier is still alive, he's an interesting man. You know, two years ago he went to Russia to visit the museums and all that. He's got that in him, he likes things, he's got a good big family at home, and when I go with my niece, I tell her, it's a very warm family. When you enter into that house, there is always somebody in the family coming in and out, in and out, always. And there's always lots of talk."¹⁴

Oscar Héon

Cap-de-la-Madeleine
1901-1976

"THERE WAS ONCE A LITTLE EXHIBITION at the Quebec City museum, a good while ago, around the beginning of the 1970s, and I went to it. We were shown some works by Oscar Héon. I said to myself, Oscar Héon, hmmm, it's marked Cap-de-la-Madeleine. I have to discover this man and his work. So a little while later, I went down to Cap-de-la-Madeleine, and I stopped at a gas station to ask if they knew a carver who did some little carvings. No, they didn't know anything about him. I went to the post office. No luck. I went somewhere else, I don't remember where it was, now. There was a young girl there, and she said to me, I'll find him for you, Mrs. Sharpe. We'll get the phone book and look up all the Héons. By the third one, she said, yes, I know the little restaurant where he eats at lunch at eleven thirty, it's Le Carroussel, Fusey Street. I was scarcely one hundred feet away from him. Oh, I found that extraordinary! Things like that often happened to me. I stopped in, and there was something special there, I don't know how to explain, a feeling of excitement!

He lived in a boarding house, and the boarders would leave for work during the day. He was deaf. I knocked, and knocked, and knocked. Finally, he came and opened the door, and I talked to him about the carvings, and so he brought me down the hall into his little room at the back. That's all he had: a little bedroom and a little Canadian chair. He would sit by his window and make his little carvings. That would keep him occupied all day long, he didn't produce all that many. And so he said, I'll make you something for the next time you come back. He always spoke to me in English. I asked him, why do you speak to me in English, Mr. Héon? He replied, because you're not French-Canadian."¹⁵

Damase Richard

1851-1922

"HE AND LOUIS JOBIN were colleagues, and he designed all the flowers and the little decorations on the sleighs and the little summer carts, the seats were all decorated. Both were from Pont-Rouge de Portneuf."¹⁶

"Damase worked with few tools: three gouges (one of 2.54 cm, one of 1.9 cm and the other 1.27 cm), two pocket knives, a plane, an axe. In the beginning, he'd make a sort of small cardboard pattern that he would enlarge to the scale of the piece he

wanted to make. His method was fairly unique; he would put the model in front of the glow of the oil lamp and trace the shadow it cast to get an enlarged version of the animal on the cardboard. He would go out into the woods himself to get his wood (linden) and then he'd age it (...) His assembly techniques were quite unusual as well. Instead of glue, which he made himself in any case, he tended to use carpentry techniques like lap joints or mortise and tenon joints (...) Damase Richard always painted his pieces. He made his own paint using primary colours that came in little blocks, probably agglomerated mineral powders. Crushed with a hammer and finely ground, these pigments were then mixed with linseed oil and turpentine. All he needed was to put 'a pea-sized drop in a gallon' (...) These colours were applied in successive coats before they were completely dry to create the effects of transparency that characterize his production."¹⁷

This cat has a lot of expression, it's a barn cat. When he'd come into the house, which was rare, hop! he'd go out again... We can see the expression on the cat's face.

Philippe Roy

1899-1982

"IN QUEBEC CITY, I USED to go to the antique dealers, down near the train tracks. Mr. Zar, the Frenchman who was there — there were two or three dealers, one next to the other — Mr. Zar, who had Armenian background, he always had more stuff than the others. So I'd go to his place, I'd say, Mr. Zar, what have you got for me today? Oh, not much, he'd say, there's a box under the counter with all sorts of animals in it. Oh, I want to see them. They were the first animals by Philippe Roy. Later, I asked Mr. Roy, when did you make those? He'd done them at the beginning of the 1950s. But at the time, I didn't know. I asked Mr. Zar who'd brought them to him, which dealer; he told me it was the guy from Bellechasse, Rita's brother. I can't remember his name. I went to see him, and I said, I'm the one who bought the little animals from Mr. Zar. Who made them? Oh, he said, I won't tell you his name. He lives in the country with his sister, and don't try going there, he's got a dog... and he said this and that to discourage me. He never wanted to tell me who it was. It took me two years to find him. And so when I went to see him,

Those carvers, they were happy that we liked them and admired them, but it went no further than that. They didn't really know what artists they were. It wasn't known, it wasn't recognized. It was later on, that I said: You know Mr. Roy, there are museums, the National Museum has some of your work, I have a lot of your work. But it didn't turn his head, he took it well... Yes, he was pleased that we liked his work, but no more than that. No, they weren't people who were pretentious in any way about what they did. If we admired them, they were happy that we thought the work was nice, but for them it was all very ordinary.

I said, tell me where that carver is, I want to put together some documentation on those animals. Oh, he said at first, he's in Bellechasse county. But he didn't say where. In the end, he told me that he was in Saint-Philémon, but he wouldn't say any more. So I left for Saint-Philémon. I stopped at a gas station and asked, do you know anyone here who makes all sorts of little carvings, crucifixes and things like that? She said, yes, he's my cousin, get into your car and I'll take you there, he lives on a country road about two miles from here. So I went there. Mr. Roy had had an accident crossing the road in front of his place, a car had hit him. He was in hospital, but Miss Marie was there. Oh, she wanted me to drive to the hospital. But I couldn't, I had to go down to Quebec City that evening. I came back in a month. There was nothing in the house. In the beginning, they used to give everything away. Anyone who came to the house, any time, they'd be given a little carving if they liked it.

In the fall, Philippe Roy—remember, it's dark in November—he didn't have much to do on the farm except look after a few animals he had, and so he would carve. That's when he began to carve, in the early 1950s. Those two little reindeer are magnificent, they're the first ones he made.

The fall that I saw him, he said to me, Mrs. Sharpe, I'm going to make something for you this winter, I've got it. He always said what he was going to make, he always had it worked out in his head first. He could see it all. I said, what are you going to make for me? He said, I'm not going to tell you. I'll surprise you in the spring. It was the *Holy Virgin* and the *Flight into Egypt*, and I'm enormously fond of it."¹⁸

Joseph Shink

Beaumont
1884-1963

"I KNEW HIM WELL. He had the prettiest little house, just past Beaumont, and he loved flowers. He used to grow flowers and bring them to Quebec City to sell, lilies... He wasn't a collector, he collected to sell certain pieces. He was an original character and he was a tall man, six feet. He couldn't read or write much, but when we bought things he knew how to count. In his little house that was so adorable, you'd come in and the floor was pumpkin yellow, and there was a sort of Victorian buffet with little glasses for wine, to serve you as soon as you came in. I used to spend whole afternoons with him. He was quiet, a very nice man, never married. You know, he's of German descent, after the fall of Quebec, in Wolfe's army, I'd say his ancestors were... He didn't speak English, he spoke French. He's always lived there, by the edge of the water, in Beaumont.

He wore a frock coat with a flower in the buttonhole. Oh! People in Quebec City thought he was crazy, the way he dressed. He'd drive along the country roads on a motorcycle. He had a big bag, and he would buy things, dishes and various things that he could sell. He'd do his carving in the winter. The road passed by his house, a little further on. He had an old sofa by the window, and he would lie on his sofa and carve, and watch the cars go by. That's how he would spend the winter.

I went there with one of my girlfriends in the fall, in November. A little snow had fallen. We went out from the house to the big barn out back. All of a sudden he stopped, and was leaning over to look at something on the ground. He said, poor little thing. I thought it must have been a little bird or something. It was a tiny little miniature pansy. He loved flowers, he was very sensitive, that man."¹⁹

These ones aren't coloured [unlike those in the collection of the Quebec City museum]. I'd asked Mr. Shink, he wasn't well then, it was a few years before he died, and I said to him that we would go and buy some colours at the store. He said no, he wasn't well.

Maria Joyal

Saint-Louis
1901-1986

"AH! SHE WAS A MARVELLOUS WOMAN. When I met her, she was sixty years old. Maria Laplante Joyal, 1901-1986, Saint-Louis, Richelieu County, farmer's wife.

The first time I went there, I dropped in at Saint-Louis-sur-Richelieu where she lived, and her husband was alone in the house. I asked, where is Mrs. Joyal? She's not here today, he said. And then he showed me three or four rugs. They were little villages, marked Saint-whatever. I can't remember if he let me have one that time. She used to show them and sell them in Sorel. So anyway, I came back a week later, and I said, Mrs. Joyal, I'll take every rug that you make. She made me nine hundred and fifty, altogether. I knew her for about ten years. She was the only person who used to write like that on her rugs, and I let her do whatever she liked. I'd go there once a month, and she'd have four or five rugs made, one a week."²⁰

I asked her: Madame Joyal, on the backing, do you make your drawing first in pencil? She said: No, I take my crochet hook, and then she'd trace the outline of everything she did. She didn't need any more detail than that.

She's the one who made this, that lady, because I bought it from her in Louiseville. I said to her: make me a big rug. She made little ones for herself. Just imagine, she made that. I hadn't told her what to do.

Blouin's bull. Her neighbour had that big bull. He loved his bull, but for the winter he had to rid of it. In the end, he sold it and then a truck came to pick it up. They loaded the bull into the truck, and it was gone. She made this rug about it. The neighbour was sad to have to let it go, but he had no place to house it for the winter. The truckdriver and the owner of the bull, they pushed it into the truck. It didn't want to go, animals are sensitive, and they know what's going on.

THE MARIUS BARBEAU COLLECTION

We expected that the art of uneducated habitants would be rough and rude. Far from it - everywhere we discovered a sense of form and grace. The conclusion was inevitable: the farmer had not created what he conserved so well; he simply conserved it. He had inherited the rich oral and artistic heritage of old France. More than any others, he sustained himself on this in his isolation. Our songs, tales and arts, which today seem rustic, are authentic, from an ancient source and a noble lineage. They are worthy of respect, and can still be given pride of place in the arts and literature.

Marius Barbeau. "Notre tradition, que devient-elle?" *La Presse*, Montréal, 23 January 1932, p. 85.

Charles Barbeau

Sainte-Marie de Beauce
d. 1919

"MY FATHER, FOR INSTANCE, though a farmer, used to while away the winters in his workshop making fine furniture. That avocation was an invaluable recreation to him as a stimulus after summer labour on the farm. He carved flowers, animals, and other objects. Up at five in the morning he would finish a chain of wooden roses begun the night before. To him this occupation was a pleasure from childhood to old age. Though he may be described as a folk carver, his taste for sculpture was derived from the old professional art of Quebec. He had known, as a young man, two professional carvers, the Dion brothers, while they were working on the decorations for his parish church."²¹

Marius Barbeau grilled his father on hundreds of subjects: the bone-setters of the Beauce, brick makers, different types of fencing—interwoven, brushwood, Irish style, field stone...²² The researcher also delved into his father's vast repertoire of songs, but to our knowledge, he never broached the subject of his cabinet-making.

Médard Bourgault

Saint-Jean Port-Joli
1897-1967

"THIS WOOD SCULPTOR, the son of a carpenter in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Islet County, had the rare distinction of conducting a sculpture school. I am convinced that the historians of the future will designate Médard Bourgault as the creator of the school of Saint-Jean-Port-Joli. [...] His early sculptures of religious subjects reflect the soul of a mystic, and in their sincere innocence they are reminiscent of certain bas reliefs of Romanesque or medieval cathedrals."²³

Médard Bourgault carves the people and scenes of his native Saint-Jean-Port-Joli: this old shoemaker makes and mends day in and day out, for the habitants. Notice the fire-logs stacked beneath his stool²⁴.

Head of a Canadian wearing a tuque. Originally with a pipe (which came off) "Artist's tribute to Mr. Marius Barbeau 1940" by carver Soucy of Montréal, for many years (stone) carver at Parliament in Ottawa.

After a hard day of difficult work, I came home in the evening tired and discouraged because I didn't like having to run around like that during the day. My wife told me that a man who had seen the carvings I had in the attic had come in and asked my name and whether I had any other carvings, and so she showed him around the house, and he was as delighted by the sculptures as he was by his discovery of me.

[...] That man asked me to tell him the story of my carving work and he wrote down what I said... Mr. Barbeau bought sixty dollars worth of carvings; he talked to me about the Montreal Handicrafts Guild and encouraged me to continue—he insisted, even. I couldn't believe my ears, if I hadn't restrained myself I would have jumped up and embraced him because I couldn't find the words to thank him enough. Finally, I was going to be able to work at what I'd wanted to do for so long [...] I was sorry to see him leave.

[...] Sometimes at night I would try to work out in my head some problem that I hadn't been able to solve that day, and so I'd get up after midnight [...] I'd have found a solution to the problem I hadn't been able to figure out during the day, and so I'd pull on my pants and boots, take the chisel and gouge and knife and go to it—only then could I go back to bed and sleep in peace.²⁴

Jean-Baptiste Côté

Quebec City
1834-1907

"WE DON'T OFTEN APPLY the term 'animalier' to our wood sculptors who have been inspired by animals [...] Both the form and the name are far from common here. However, on Île d'Orléans I was told that Jean-Baptiste Côté, a Quebec City sculptor, was a wild life artist, perhaps for the simple reason that when he would visit his friends the (Félix) Goulets in Saint-Pierre, he used to pass the time by 'whittling little animals' that he would leave with them as souvenirs. On the wall in their house, the Goulets had a pretty paper holder that Côté had decorated with a medallion in bas relief, representing a cow grazing next to her calf in a country landscape. The work was so good that I had to buy it. [...] This sculptor, it was said, could make 'anything he wanted in no time flat; he couldn't resist whittling away with his knife once he got his

hands on a nice piece of wood.' Actually, Côté was only an animalier in his spare time. He later became a sculptor of figureheads and arabesques for the prows of the sailing ships that were built at the mouth of the St. Charles River; then, from 1866 to 1869, he was a contributor to *La Sâc*, creating biting satirical caricatures of the politicians and worthies of the times in superb woodcuts. Later, he turned to religious sculptures and high reliefs, the quality of which has never been surpassed in these parts. Fine examples are his versions of the *Last Supper* at the National Gallery, the Royal Ontario Museum and with Vincent Massey in London, and his *Nativity* and *Resurrection* in the Musée de Québec. Côté and Louis Jobin are among our foremost artists, and the only reason they are not better known is because of our shameful indifference.

Only a relatively small number of Côté's animals have come down to us, including grazing or gazing cows, reclining lions, running dogs, cranes, chickens, partridges, guinea hens and nesting birds. Some of his cows, measuring two hands high, are conserved in the museums in Fort Chambly, Quebec City, Ottawa and elsewhere, and his son Claude, who is still alive, has carved similar ones. Apparently, Côté carved charming domestic animals for the old Nativity creche in the Saint-Sauveur church in Quebec City, but they have disappeared; in their place, moulded plaster figurines have been substituted, more in keeping with modern tastes."²⁵

A cow carved by Claude Côté. Son of Jean-Baptiste Côté, carver from Saint-Roch, Québec. About 70 years old in 1928.

The pelican in its nest feeding its young. Unpainted sculpture. Found at Villeneuve's, Saint-Romuald, in 1930.

Louis Jobin

Saint-Raymond de Portneuf
1845-1928

"THE ONLY YEARS DURING which I knew this wood sculptor, in his Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré studio, were the last three of his long and hardworking life. He abandoned his gouge and his mallet in 1925, and died in 1928 at the age of eighty-three. My most vivid memory is of the first visit I paid him, in the company of painters Jackson and Lismer from Toronto.

One fine August morning, the two artists and I climbed down the Sainte-Famille cliffs on Île d'Orléans to board a schooner to cross the north arm of the St. Lawrence at high tide, as the people of the island would do each summer on a pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne. When we disembarked near the church, we saw sculptures on all sides—wooden standard-bearing angels, statues around a mossy fountain (which has since disappeared), and the large garden statue of Saint Anne, radiant as a goddess.

A child led us by a roundabout path to old Jobin's shop, which we had heard about. It was perched atop a hill; small statues of Saint Mark and Saint Matthew, supported by brackets, decorated the gable and served as a shop sign. Covered with a grey patina, they faced the east winds which in former times had brought sailors up the St. Lawrence River."²⁶

"Jobin was no mere workman, as he called himself, but an artist, and a great one. His work was original and inspired [...] Jobin's angels had an airy, celestial quality, and the 'angelic' master craftsman who sculpted them was imbued with mysticism as well. He tenderly chiselled the lines of their foreheads and cheeks, and detailed with purity the feminine lines of their busts, arms and hands.

His delicate touch when sculpting angels was transformed into a robust strength when he modelled the apostles; under his hand, St. Peter, St. Paul and St. John came alive with a truly apostolic fervour. The lines of their faces could compare with the splendour of Giotto's brush or Michelangelo's chisel."²⁷

Small box with a small dog on the lid, work I did as an apprentice.

Barbeau Collection, Maîtres sculpteurs, Louis Jobin, file 40, box 140, CMC.

Octave Morel

1837-1918

"MOREL WAS A TRUE ORIGINAL, with a taste for invention and travel. Born in 1837, he was an excellent furniture maker, apprenticing with English cabinetmaker William Drum in Quebec City. He was a man of his times, fascinated by progress: he invented an umbrella that opened automatically, a smoking hat (the sculpted pipe bowl was placed on the crown of the hat, and a partially hidden rubber tube connected it to the horn mouthpiece), a watch holder in rocaille style, a turret in which, like in the old song, 'Madame à sa tour monte,' an armwrestling mannikin, a fine sheet-metal shirt that never needed laundering, complete with collar, and a money box that was never empty—once it was filled! Not having a practical turn of mind, he was constantly surprised to see that his 'beautiful machines' found no takers. The need for money led him from time to time to work for Drum or Falardeau, where he decorated the finest pieces of furniture of the times with fruit and flowers in relief work.

Morel once spent two years in Boston, building a large organ case. He could have stayed longer, but homesickness brought him back to the St. Lawrence. He worked for the organ builder Casavant and for Boileau, a church builder. From there he went to La Grande-Rivière, Gaspé, to sculpt the decorations of the church, and then moved to Sainte-Anne de Beaupré, where he was taken into service by the Redemptorists to work on their church (which has since burned down). They gave him room and board—he seems to have forgotten his wife somewhere along the way—and then sent him out to their mission in Manitoba, where he spent two years. On his return from the West, his pockets filled with money, he confessed to his colleague Jobin that 'he had become allergic to work and had come home to finish a wonderful invention.' This was a fire escape ladder, which came to nothing in the end, since someone else had already patented the same invention. By this time he was fairly advanced in years, and he was content to stay with Jobin, who was good to him, and to whom he left, as a final souvenir, a little carved chest, decorated with roses on the front, thistles on the sides and a sleeping dog on the lid.²⁸ 'The sleeping dog is me,' he said jokingly to Jobin. 'You can't get rid of me.' Shortly afterwards he died, leaving him his smoker's hat, his automatic umbrella, 'Madame à sa tour monte', and the sleeping dog on the lovely little chest to his friend Jobin."²⁹

Hat, design in wood with pipe carved by Morel.

Barbeau Collection, Maîtres sculpteurs, Louis Jobin, file 40, box 140, CMC

Notes

FOREWARD

1. Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-modern world*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992, p.132. David Flemming, "Collecting: in Praise of Bias!", *Bias in Museums*, Museum Professionals Group, Proceedings of the annual study weekend held in Exeter, transaction no 22, 1986.

PART ONE: ESSAYS

WOMEN AND SEXUALITY IN FOLK ART

1. Inglis, Stephen. *Something Out of Nothing. The Work of George Cockayne*. Ottawa. National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Paper No. 46. 1983, p. 40.
2. Inglis, "Something Out".
3. Duby, Georges. "Images de femmes." In Duby, G., Perrot, M. (editor), *Images de femmes*. Paris, Plon, 1992, p. 10-33.
4. Arcand, Bernard. *Le Jaguar et le tamanoir. Vers le degré zéro de la pornographie*. Montréal, Boréal, 1991.

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FOLK ART AND MARIUS BARBEAU. THE POPULIST

1. See (the Marius Barbeau collection) note 5.

THE COLLECTIONS

- 1 The height of this type of classification was attained by an Ontario author: "Folk art can be divided into two principal categories, primitive art and naïve art, each consisting of both paintings and sculpture. In the case of naïve art, the sub-classification of provincial art [...] includes religious work, portraits, handiwork, and the ethnic pieces." Blake McKendry, *Folk Art, Primitive and Naïve Art in Canada*, Toronto, Methuen, 1983, p. 20.
- 2 Madeleine Choquette et al, *Manuel de rédaction*, Hull, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993, p. 36.
- 3 James Clifford, "On collecting art and culture," *Out there: marginalization and contemporary cultures*, New Museum of Contemporary Art - New York, MIT Press - Cambridge, 1990, p. 153.
- 4 Bakhine quoted by Trvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtine: le principe dialogique*. Paris, Seuil, 1981, p. 89.
- 5 Paper by Hugues de Varine, *Les troisième axes du patrimoine*. Sherbrooke, 28 November 1993.

THE MARIUS BARBEAU COLLECTION

1. Marius Barbeau, *Le ruisseau y chante*, National Museum of Man, Ottawa, 1979, p. 4.
2. Mario Béland, *Marius Barbeau et l'art au Québec: bibliographie analytique et thématique*, Québec, outils de recherche du CELAT, No. 1, 1988.
3. Marius Barbeau, "Carnets de terrain," Collection Barbeau, CMC. Retranscribed for the Museum during the 1980s by Claire Darling, who had been Barbeau's secretary and was thus familiar with the secrets of his personal shorthand. So as not to unduly encumber the text, references for brief quotes from the notebooks are not included here. However, the compiled research is available from the author on request.
4. Although this basic material has already been put to abundant use, borrowed by Barbeau himself for his documentary research, there remains an impressive quantity of notes that are a mine of varied information.
5. A weaving technique where yarn is drawn at regular intervals to create small buckles, or "buntons," in the pattern. See Dorothy K. Burnham, *The Comfortable Arts: Traditional Spinning and Weaving*, National Gallery of Canada, 1981, p. 68.
6. Marius Barbeau, "Le dernier de nos grands artisans," *Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada*, Section 1, 1933, p. 33-48.
7. Marius Barbeau, "Je suis un pionnier," *National Museum of Man*, Ottawa, 1982, No. 43.
8. Marius Barbeau, "Assomption Sash," *National Museum*, Ottawa, Bulletin 93, 1939, and *Cinture flechée*, Montreal, Paysana, 1945.
9. Mario Béland, *Marius Barbeau et l'art au Québec*, p. 5 and 13.
10. "Marius Barbeau, who professed no political nationalism, was of the generation that accepted Confederation as a given." Marcel Rioux, preface to *Patenteux du Québec*, Montreal. Paris: Pris, 1978.
11. René Hardy, "Notes sur le concept de culture populaire," *La construction d'une culture: le Québec et l'Amérique française*, ed. Gérard Bouchard, Quebec. Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993.
12. Paul Carpentier, "Coup d'oeil sur les écoles de pensée en folklore québécois," Quebec, CELAT, Université Laval, 1976.
13. Marius Barbeau, "Le dernier de nos grands artisans," p. 33-48.
14. Gérard Bouchard, "Une nation, deux cultures: continuités et ruptures dans la pensée québécoise traditionnelles (1840-1960)," *La construction d'une culture*, p. 33.
15. Carole Henderson Carpenter, *Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their Role in Canadian Culture*, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series No. 26, Ottawa, 1979, p. 228.
See also the Leach Collection, Folklore Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
16. At the home of Joseph-Arthur in Baie-Saint-Paul, Jean-François Blanchette, "Carnet de terrain," CMC, 1983, BJD7, p. 104.
17. The ethnological process has often been in the grip of this type of idealization, starting with the European perception of Africa: see Jean Jamin, "Objets trouvés des paradis perdus," *Collections Fusion*, Musée d'ethnographie, 1982, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, p. 69-100.

THE ENGLISH AMATEURS COLLECTION

1. With the exception of Marcel Rioux, who was not interested in material folklore.
2. The Sharpe collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization counts 884 objects from Franco-Quebec culture, making up close to one-fifth of the collections devoted to Quebec folk arts (folklore division). The Museum also holds other major collections, including the Craig collection (580 objects) and the Price collection (419 objects), acquired during the same period in the late 1970s, when collectors were the Museum's principal source of artifacts.
3. Of the 890 objects in the Sharpe collection, 884 are of French-Canadian origin.
4. Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr., "Confronting Contemporary Folk Art," *The Ties That Bind: Folk Art in Contemporary American Culture*, Cincinnati, Ohio, The Contemporary Arts Center, 1986.
5. Art historian Russell Harper had been charged by the Museum with evaluating the potential of the folklore collection: "She (Mrs. Sharpe) also feels, justifiably, that she has the cream of the material gathered over thirty or forty years of collecting." Russell Harper, "Collecting of Folk Art by the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies," CMC, 1976, p. 147.
6. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.
7. Gerald Ferguson, "Notes on the collection," CMC, 1981.
8. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Jean-François Blanchette, 1983.
9. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. There are 646 decoys in the museum's collection most of which were harvested between 1972 and 1989. Wes Martie was responsible for the purchase of 499 of them; too, it must be admitted that former director Dr. Taylor had a particular weakness for them...
13. Five-sixths of the collection is anonymous: 737 objects out of a total of 884.
14. "On the 123 pieces of pottery received with the purchase of a collection from Mrs. Nettie Sharpe," Elizabeth Collard, 8 March 1980. (Folklore Division #978.170).
15. The program from the exhibition of French Canadian "Primitives" at the Art Association of Montreal in 1940, confirms without any doubt that the artist of *La mise au Tombeau* was Marie-Paule McLean. See Barbeau Papers (Box 35, file 9).
16. Letter from François Tremblay to Renée Well Gagnon, La Malbaie, 7 October 1981.
17. Letter from Thérèse McLean to Pascale Galipeau, Chicoutimi, 27 January 1994.
18. Maud Mogan interviewed by François Tremblay, La Malbaie, July 1944.
19. In 1994, with collector Jacques Cloutier, Sainte-Foy, Quebec. Report from Jean Simard to Pascale Galipeau, 25 January 1994.
20. Patrick Morgan interviewed by Andrée Gendreau on 28 June 1978. Andrée Gendreau, "Charlevoix, terre d'origine, lieu de l'autre," *Université Laval*, Ph.D. thesis, 1982, p. 280.
21. Gendreau, "Charlevoix."

THE PATENTEUX COLLECTION

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, Paris, Plon, p. 26.
2. Jean Simard, *Pour passer le temps: artistes populaires du Québec*, Québec, Les publications du Québec, Cahiers du Patrimoine, No. 17, 1985, p. 15.
3. Louise Degrosbois, Raymonde Lamothe and Lise Nantel, *Les patenteux du Québec*, Montréal Parti pris, 1974.
4. Statement made by Jean-François Blanchette to Pascale Galipeau, Hull, 1993.
5. Laurent-Michel Vacher, *Pamphlet sur la situation des arts au Québec*, Montréal, L'Aurore, 1975, p. 101.
6. Working-class language in Quebec.
7. Gérald Godin interviewed by Jacques Godbout, *Book-Club programme*, CBF-FM, 26 June 1972. Quoted in *Traces pour une autobiographie*, Montréal, L'Hexagone, 1994, p. 117.
8. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 373.
9. National Museum of Man, *Tradition et Évolution: le patrimoine des Ukrainiens du Canada*, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Ottawa, 1972.
10. With Greg Curnoe. See Curnoe and Thérberge, *The Review of the Association for Documentation of Neglected Aspects of Culture in Canada*, London, 1974.
11. Louise Degrosbois et al, *Les patenteux du Québec*.
12. The piece by Lauda Parent is identified under *anonymous Québec folk artist*. See Tom Lackey, "The nature of folk and vernacular art in Canada: Report on the Stanley House conference, 1978," *Racer*, VI, No. 1, 1979, p. 41.
13. Jean Martin, "Les aspects territoriaux de l'évolution culturelle du Québec," *La construction d'une culture*, p. 408.
14. See Jacques Godbout, "Le festival de la bête," Montréal, *Le Mackan*, March 1975, p. 54. See also a more recent article on the perception of landscape artists, written by Melissa Clark-Jones, "Labour and the Tools of Nostalgia," *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 32, 1990, p. 111-143.

PART TWO: NARRATIVES

1. Georges Bédard interviewed by Jean-François Blanchette, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, 1982. Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews are on file in the Documents Collection section of the library of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
2. Noël Champagne interviewed by Pierre Crépeau and Jean-François Blanchette, Bishopston, 1980.
3. Interview from the book by Louise de Grosbois, Raymonde Lamothe and Lise Nantel, *Les patenteux du Québec*, Montréal, Parti Pris, No. 4, 1978, p. 186.
4. *Les patenteux*, p. 20-23.
5. *Les patenteux*, p. 168-179.
6. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Alphonse Grenier interviewed by

Donna Wiggmore, *From the Heart*, Toronto, 1979. Alphonse Grenier was responding to the question "Why are there so many devils in your boxes?"

7. Édouard Jasmin interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Montréal, 1985.
8. As told by Pierre Pelletier, Rivière-du-Loup, April 1994.
9. Stephen Inglis, "Miniature and meaning: Selections from the collections of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies," Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1983, manuscript.
10. Annette Poulin, Archélas Poulin's daughter, interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Verdun 1994.
11. Nélphas Prévost, interviewed by Jean-François Blanchette, Fasset, 1979.
12. Arthème Saint-Germain interviewed by Pierre Thérberge, Thurso, 1970.
13. Georges Racicot interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Calumet, 1993.
14. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Bernard Genest, *Un monde peuplé d'animaux: Wilfrid Richard et les siens, sculpteurs*, Museum of Civilization, Québec Agenda, 1986, p. 35.
18. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.
19. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Serge Delroy and Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1978-1993.
20. Nettie Sharpe interviewed by Pascale Galipeau, Saint-Lambert, 1993.
21. Marius Barbeau, "Laurentian Wood Carvers," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 4, October 1935, p. 183.
22. Marius Barbeau Collection, box 187, f. 60, CMC.
23. Jean-Marie Gauvreau, "Quelques artisans du Québec d'aujourd'hui," Montréal, *Revue du Québec industriel*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1940, p. 10.
24. Médard Bourgault's diary: quoted by Angéline Saint-Pierre, *Médard Bourgault sculpteur*, Québec, Garneau, 1973, p. 41-43.
25. Marius Barbeau, "Au couteau ou à l'aiguille," *La Revue Moderne*, May 1941, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 18.
26. Marius Barbeau, *Québec où survit l'ancienne France*, Québec, Garneau, 1937, p. 88-89.
27. Marius Barbeau, *Louis Jobin, statuaire*, Montréal, Beauchemin, 1968, p. 19.
28. In speaking of this enigmatic chest, Barbeau got carried away in his style and contributed to perpetuating a legend. This attribution to Morel is belied by statements made by Jobin and collected by the ethnographer himself. According to Jobin, the sculptor actually made the chest when he was apprenticed, sometime between 1865 and 1868.
See Mario Béland, *Jouis Jobin, maître-sculpteur*, p. 165.
See also Marius Barbeau, *Louis Jobin, statuaire*, p. 109 and 142.
29. Marius Barbeau, "Au couteau ou à l'aiguille," *La Revue Moderne*, May 1941, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 24.

FIGURE 1, 8

Seton J. Tompkins
Ontario
Varnished and painted wood, plastic,
metal, 36.5 x 11 x 11 cm
MCC 82-166

FIGURE 2, 9

Lawrence Melanson
Nova-Scotia
1950
Painted wood and fabric,
53 x 27 x 10 cm
MCC 81-70

FIGURE 3, 11

Donald Boudreau
Nova-Scotia
1977
Painted wood, 48.5 x 21 x 12.5 cm
MCC 81-369

FIGURES 4, 6, 7

Claude Pierre Luneau
Vénus 6
Ontario
1981
Painted wood, 99 x 39 x 20 cm
MCC 81-131

FIGURE 5

Collins E. Eisenhauer
Nova-Scotia
1975
Painted wood, 21.5 x 21 x 12.5 cm
MCC 77-386

FIGURE 10

Collins E. Eisenhauer
Nova-Scotia
Painted wood, 32 x 9.5 x 10 cm
MCC 81-44

FIGURE 12

Collins E. Eisenhauer
Nova-Scotia
Painted wood, 12 x 29 x 9 cm
MCC 81-45

FIGURE 13

George Cockayne
Ontario
1970
Painted wood, putty and pins,
41 x 27 x 21 cm
MCC 75-1053

FIGURE 14

Artist unknown
Midkey Mouse
1975
cotton and synthetic material on
burlap,
87.5 x 46 cm
CMC 80-589

FIGURE 15

Médard Bourgault
Au bon vieux temps
CMC 80-589

FIGURE 16

Artist unknown
Region of Haut-Saint-Maurice
Carved cup
pre-1890
varnished wood and sinew,
17.5 x 9.5 x 6.5 : 6.5 x 5 cm
CMC A 430

FIGURE 17

Arthème Saint-Germain
Rocks
1970
polychromed rock

FIGURE 18

Artists unknown
20th century
Butter and sugar moulds
wood
CMC (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 19, 20

Marius Barbeau's *Field Notebook*
mid-1930s

FIGURE 21

Artist unknown
Assomption sash
first half of 19th century
wool and beads, 265 x 21 cm
MCC A431

FIGURE 22

Madame Ulric Bouchard
Ile aux Coudres
Buttoned blanket
c. 1875-1900
wool and cotton, 210 x 161 cm
CMC A 340
"Arts of Old Quebec". Exhibition
mounted by the National Museum,
National Gallery and National Parks of
Canada, 1934. Marius Barbeau
Papers. CMC 77 567

FIGURE 23

Artist unknown
Tabernacle door
19th century
Charlebourg church
gilt wood, 22.2 x 32 cm
CMC 79-660

FIGURE 24

Artist unknown
Fish
19th century (?)
wood, 33.1 x 12.8 x 5.5 cm
CMC A 495CMC A431

FIGURE 25, 91

Letter from Philippe Roy to Nettie
Sharpe
Nettie Sharpe Papers. CMC 94-35

FIGURE 26

Artists unknown
Decoys
20th century
wood and glass
CMC (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 27

Artist unknown
Buffet
early 20th century
Sainte-Marguerite de Dorchester
painted wood, 181 x 95 x 45 cm
CMC 77-888 (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 28

Artists unknown
Peg tops
20th century
wood and metal
CMC (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 29

Henn Lajeunesse
Maurice Duplessis
c. 1970
painted wood, 13.2 x 13.1 x 27 cm
CMC 85-161 (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 30

*The Blessed Redeemer and the Holy
Virgin*
polychromed lithographs
Jacques Cloutier Collection,
Photo: Guy Couture

FIGURE 31

Marie-Paule McLean
1917-1980
Chicoutimi
Christ's Entombment
1938
wool on burlap, 187 x 126
CMC 83-1014

FIGURE 32

Artist unknown
Candlestick
possibly 18th century
wood covered in silver leaf,
25 x 22 x 81.1 cm
CMC 77-1084 (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 33

Artist unknown
Sainte-Rosalie de Bagot
High Mass
early 20th century
polychromed wood, 54 x 32 x 29 cm
CMC 77-992 (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 34

Maria Laplante-Joyal
La prière à la croix
 Praying at the Cross
 c. 1970
 wool, cotton and synthetic material on burlap, 102 x 58 cm
 CMC 80-139 (Sharpe Collection)

FIGURE 35

Song composed by Hosanna Dupuis

FIGURE 36

Hosanna Dupuis
Penguin
 c. 1975
 wood and paper, 68 x 34 x 38 cm
 CMC 80-125

FIGURE 37

Félicien Lévesque
Grue, Grus
 Crane
 c. 1980
 polychromed wood and lichen,
 70 x 40 x 23 cm
 CMC 90-284

FIGURE 38

Lauda Parent
Butterfly Tree
 between 1930 and 1960
 polychromed wood,
 25.5 x 13.5 x 9.5 cm
 CMC 70-1036

FIGURE 39

Georges Bédard
Le Parc de New York au 16^{ème} siècle
 vert la fin
 New York Park
 c. 1980
 acrylic on plywood, 81.3 x 122 cm
 title on back
 CMC 82-301

FIGURE 40

Ernest Gendron
The Führer
 between 1970 and 1980
 acrylic on pressboard, 25.7 x 30.7 cm
 CMC 84-2

FIGURE 41

Édouard Jasmin
A louer pour l'été, appelez à la grange
 For Rent for the Summer
 1982
 polychromed ceramic, 27 x 19.3 x 5.2
 CMC 83-1815

FIGURE 42, 37

Alphonse Grenier
Music Box (and details)
 c. 1970
 various materials,
 143 x 95.5 x 46.5 cm
 CMC 79-436

FIGURE 43

Jean-Yves Grégoire
Liquor cabinet
 1976
 various materials, 168 x 81 x 52 cm
 CMC 92-396.1-16

FIGURE 44

Oliva Charlebois-Larente
Untitled
 1978
 wool, cotton and synthetic material on burlap, 99 x 53 cm
 CMC 80-583

Oliva Charlebois-Larente
 Photo: Jean-François Blanchette,
 1981
 MCC 584-7320

FIGURE 45

Bernadette Morin
The Devil
 1975
 cotton and synthetic material on burlap,
 58 x 94 cm
 CMC 80-604

FIGURE 46

Edmond Châtigny
Mother Bird
 c. 1975
 polychromed wood, 95 x 61 x 121 cm
 CMC 81-424 (Price Collection)

FIGURE 47

Georges Bédard
Les Rapide, dangereux du Clainday de 1800 à 1900 la guellette de l'or trouver sur le sol canadien
 Klondike Rapids
 c. 1980
 acrylic and shells on plywood,
 65 x 122
 signed with title on back
 CMC 82-299

FIGURE 48

Georges Bédard
Defence Américaine : 1939 à 1945 : à l'époque de la guerre de l'Almagne : c'est à dire Hitler désirant vaincre l'univers : ville forteresse américaine contre les attaques de l'Almagne
 American Defence
 1980
 acrylic on plywood, 80.9 x 121.8 cm
 title on back with note
 CMC 82-298

Georges Bédard
 Photo: Jean-François Blanchette,
 1982
 MCC

FIGURE 49

Noé Champagne
The Garbage Can
 c. 1980
 synthetic material on burlap,
 80 x 47 cm
 CMC 82-470

FIGURE 50

Noé Champagne
Horses
 1978
 cotton and synthetic material on burlap,
 77 x 47 cm
 CMC 80-645

Noé Champagne
 Photo: Jean-François Blanchette, 1980
 CMC

FIGURE 51

The Garbage Can
 Nickname given by residents of Sherbrooke to the traffic police shelter, corner of King and Grandes-Fourches streets.
 Gérard Aray holdings, Sherbrooke historical association.

FIGURE 52

Edmond Châtigny
Deer
 c. 1975
 polychromed wood,
 97 x 26.5 x 85.6 cm
 CMC 82-172 (Price Collection)
 Hosanna Dupuis
 Photo: Pierre Couillard
 c. 1975

FIGURE 53

Hosanna Dupuis
Lange du parad
 Angel of Paradise
 c. 1975
 painted pressboard, 55 x 96 cm
 CMC 80-127.1-5

FIGURE 54, 55, 56

Hosanna Dupuis
God's Toys
 wood and metal
 80-129: 37.3 x 13.8 x 23.2 cm
 80-130: 37.3 x 15.2 x 22.1 cm
 80-131: 40.3 x 25.3 x 30.6 cm

FIGURE 57

(see figure 42)

FIGURE 58

Alphonse Grenier
Adam and Eve
 1978
 polychromed plywood, 56.3 x 67 cm
 CMC 80-133